

The

January-February 2003

No. 15

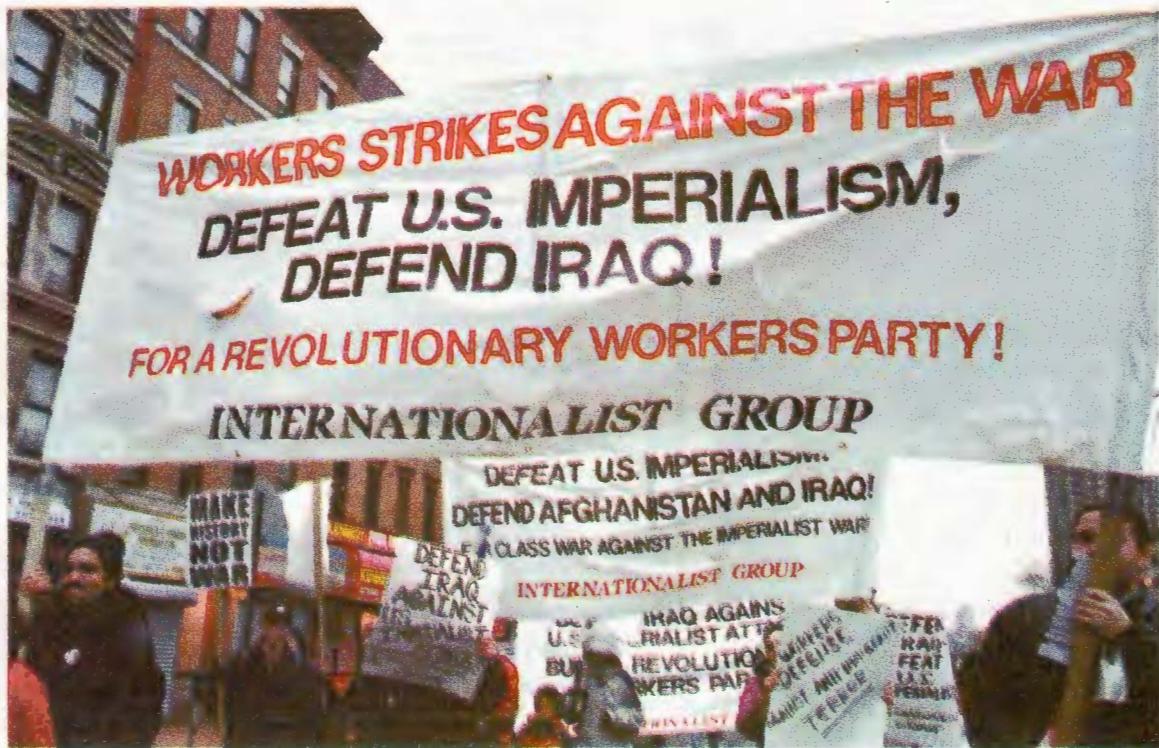
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The Internationalist



Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!

For Class War Against the Imperialist War!



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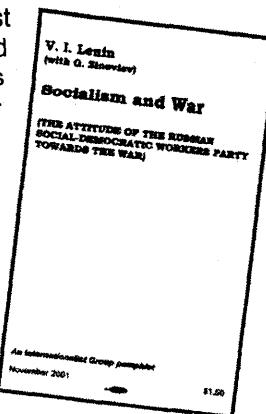
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Front page photo: IG in Harlem antiwar march, 14 December 2002.	
Subscription blank graphic based on a poster by V.A. Rodchenko, <i>Books</i> (1925).	

Order Now!**Lenin on Imperialist War**

As U.S. rulers drive for a new war against Iraq, how to fight imperialist war, and where it comes from, are crucial issues for young people, class-conscious workers and activists. Essential reading is V.I. Lenin's pamphlet *Socialism and War*. A clear and powerful explanation of the revolutionary Marxist position, it stresses the need for workers and the oppressed to fight for the **defeat** of "their own" imperialist bourgeoisie and the **defense** of semi-colonial countries targeted for aggression. The struggle against imperialist war can only go forward as a struggle for international socialist revolution!

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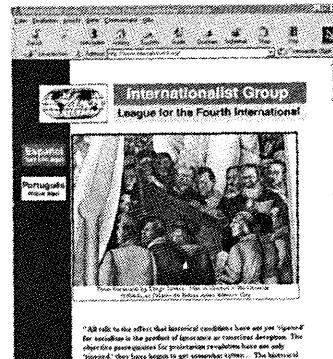
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The Internationalist

A Journal of Revolutionary Marxism
for the Reforging of the Fourth International



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No. 15



January-February 2003

Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!

For Class War Against the Imperialist War!

The imperialist rulers of the United States are gearing up to carry out a horrendous slaughter in Iraq. Already over tens of thousands of U.S. troops are in the region, with more streaming in daily to assemble an invasion force of over a quarter-million military personnel. Thousands of tanks, hundreds of air forces fighters and bombers, the most advanced weaponry – all poised to rain death and destruction on the Iraqi people. Whenever George Bush decides that he has had enough of the charade of United Nations “weapons inspection,” the Pentagon murder machine will be unleashed. Tens and hundreds of thousands are slated to die.

Meanwhile, an apparatus of police-state measures and forces is being built up to crack down on political opposition on the “home front.” And U.S. rulers may need it, because whatever the opinion pollsters tell them, the Iraq war is not and will not be popular. Already there have been substantial antiwar protests from coast to coast. After first trying to play down the size of the October 26 demonstration in Washington against war on Iraq, the *New York Times* (30 October) later admitted that it “drew 100,000 by police estimates and 200,000 by organizers”, forming a two-mile wall of marchers around the White House.”

Around the world several million people have marched against war on Iraq. Yet innumerable peace parades haven’t fazed the cold-blooded killers who run this country. Neither have fatuous debates in the UN Security Council, or the absence of the slightest evidence that the government of Iraqi强man Saddam Hussein has or is developing “weapons of mass destruction.” The U.S. military are more concerned about what they may face on the ground in Iraq. Demonstrations by armed civilian militias in Baghdad underscore that however massive the bombing, there could be bloody street fighting in the Iraqi capital



Internationalist Group contingent in march in Harlem against war on Iraq, December 14.

and elsewhere.

But the prospects of American casualties won’t stop the warmongers in Washington, either. The military ideologues who are running the show are fed up with gun-shy generals, and figure that the best way to bury the “Vietnam syndrome” (of fear of losing wars in semi-colonial countries) is to have a brutal victory, in which some U.S. soldiers get killed. But Iraq is not Afghanistan, and they may not get the quick and easy war they are counting on. The Bush gang’s aggressive strategy could backfire, but the stakes are high and they are willing to take the risk.

For this war is not just about Iraq, or just about oil, and it’s certainly no “war on terrorism” nor is it about Hussein getting “weapons of mass destruction.” (When this nationalist butcher did develop and use chemical weapons against the Iranians, it was with U.S. aid. At that very time, the Reagan administration dispatched none other than Donald Rumsfeld to negotiate with Hussein.) Rather, this war is intended to nail down the U.S.-dominated “New World Order” that George Bush Sr. proclaimed following the Persian Gulf War, as the Soviet Union was collapsing. After relentless imperialist pressure brought about the counterrevolution that destroyed the USSR – a historic defeat for the workers of the world, prepared by decades of capitulation to imperialism by the Stalinist leaders of the bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers’ states – the United States was suddenly the world’s “sole superpower.”

Yet instead of the promised order, there was an explosion of nationalist bloodletting and increasing tensions with the U.S.’ NATO allies. The government of Bush Jr., staffed by veterans of his father’s administration, is determined to “finish the job.” They are targeting not only Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, but also North Korea, China and Cuba. And they are determined to prevent a



Jesse Jackson leads October 26 "antiwar" march on White House after defending 1991 Gulf War.

regrouping of the U.S.' imperialist rivals with Russia, with its still substantial stock of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles. With the U.S. hand firmly on the Near East oil tap, Washington figures it can keep the rest of the world in line.

Needed: Not Popular-Front Peace Crawls, But Class War

This is an *imperialist war for world domination*. The issue facing opponents of imperialism is how to fight against it. As has occurred repeatedly since the 1960s, there is now a growing antiwar movement. The strategy of this movement is to look for an alliance with bourgeois liberals (if they can find any) to restrain the Bush gang. In the 1930s, such a coalition became known as the "popular front," and the fundamentals remain the same: tying the working class and the left to a section of the capitalist ruling class. Peace marches such as the January 18 demonstration in Washington, D.C. are a form of bourgeois pressure politics. Yet the Democratic Party is not about to challenge the Republican White House, for they are partners in managing the affairs of U.S. imperialism. After all, it was Bill Clinton's secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, who arrogantly declared the United States "the indispensable nation."

It is important to understand that the war on Iraq is also a war on working people, the poor, Blacks, Latinos, immigrants and other oppressed sectors in the U.S. Even after the collapse of Enron – which severely shook the stock markets, already reeling over the bursting of the technology "bubble" – the White House came right back with a plan for tax cuts in which most of the benefits would go to the richest 1 percent of the population. When anyone objects, Bush accuses them of advocating "class warfare." The Democrats rush to say, "not us" – for they are representatives of the capitalist class just as much as are the Republicans. So they end up voting for Bush's

foreign wars, domestic repression and pro big business economic policies.

Bush is right to suggest that any real opposition to his policies would have to be class war, for that is what he is waging. He won't get such opposition from the Democrats. In fact, most of the plans for increased domestic repression, the phony "war on terrorism," the looming attacks on Iraq and North Korea, were drawn up under the Clinton administration. The leaders of the popular-front "antiwar movement" also play by the rulebook of the bourgeois political game, and precisely because of that they are unable to mount a real opposition to imperialist war. If they want to get Democratic "doves" on their platforms, they have to tailor their program to what these bourgeois politicians will accept.

A dramatic example was at the October 26 demonstration in Washington, D.C. when black Democrat Jesse Jackson spoke from the platform. Jackson declared, "Some wars are necessary.... Getting Saddam out of Kuwait was necessary." Many youths in the crowd were shocked at this grotesque defense of the first Gulf War, which slaughtered over 100,000 Iraqis, but it's hardly surprising from Jackson. The demonstration organizers certainly knew what to expect, for the A.N.S.W.E.R antiwar coalition is run by the Workers World Party (WWP), which for years specialized in organizing demos for Jackson. And even after his speech, they were careful to put him at the head of the march past the White House.

The other main speaker in Washington was Ramsey Clark, founder of the International Action Coalition (another group led by the WWP) who started off with a eulogy for the thousands of U.S. soldiers who died in Vietnam and whose names are on the nearby Vietnam War Memorial. Clark did not mention the millions of Vietnamese killed by the U.S. in that counterrevolutionary war. It should be recalled that Clark was the head of the Justice Department under Lyndon Johnson, when antiwar demonstrators were chanting "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" Clark was the U.S.' "top cop" and boss of the FBI, and authorized the war by FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover against the Black Panther Party that left scores of Panthers dead and hundreds in jail.

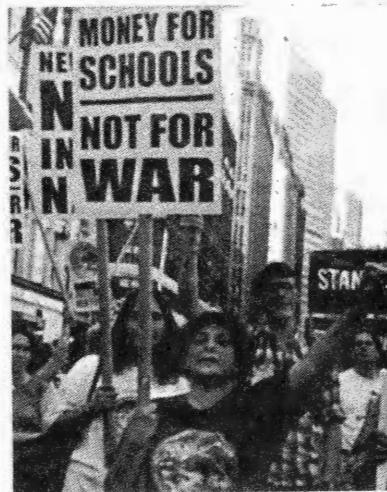
How can you fundamentally oppose imperialist war in alliance with defenders of imperialist war and organizers of capitalist repression? Answer: you can't. But seeking a "coalition" with such representatives of the ruling class is the entire program of the "peace" groups. In 1971, the main builder of the popular-front "antiwar movement," the Socialist Workers Party, drew the class line in blood by beating up leftists (supporters of the Spartacist League and Progressive Labor Party) who protested the presence of Democratic Senator Vance Hartke and union bureaucrat Victor Reuther (a longtime bag man for CIA subversion of unions overseas) at a "National Peace Action Coalition" meeting.

In the 1930s, James Burnham, then a leader of the U.S. Trotskyist movement, wrote a pamphlet titled, *The People's Front: The New Betrayal* (1937). Referring to the application

Socialist Worker

The evil of two lessers • Page 2
Two parties for the rich • Page 3
Agreement on the West Coast docks: What's in the deal? • Page 5 and 7
Front on page 11

Billions for Iraq war
Tax cuts for the rich
No help for jobless
Washington's twisted priorities
We deserve better



of popular-frontism in the United States, he wrote:

"Most significant of all is the application of the People's Front policy to 'anti-war work.' Through a multitude of pacifist organizations, and especially through the directly controlled American League against War and Fascism, the Stalinists aim at the creation of a 'broad, classless, People's Front of all those opposed to war.' The class collaborationist character of the People's Front policy is strikingly revealed through the Stalinist attitude in these organizations. They rule out in advance the Marxist analysis of war as necessarily resulting from the inner conflicts of capitalism and therefore genuinely opposed only by revolutionary class struggle against the capitalist order; and, in contrast, maintain that all persons, from whatever social class or group, whether or not opposed to capitalism, can 'unite' to stop war."

Today, the WWP, ISO et al. congratulate themselves on getting off to a quick start in building a new antiwar movement against the new war. "The Antiwar Movement: A Great Beginning," headlined the ISO's *International Socialist Review* (November-December 2002). "Some who are understandably impatient for a mass radicalization in U.S. society might be frustrated by the fact that the new movement is dominated by liberal ideas," it writes, counseling patience. The ISO calls for a two-point program, "No war – no sanctions," and for the formation of antiwar committees which "should be able to embrace anyone who supports these demands, whether they are socialists who oppose U.S. imperialism in principle or Democratic Party sympathizers who believe that the UN can be a force for peace."

As a direct consequence of this pandering to the bourgeois liberals, there has been an outbreak of anti-Communist redbaiting among these "disparate forces." The "peace is patriotic" crowd has gone after A.N.S.W.E.R. by pointing to the WWP's support to North Korea, and attacks the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party's role in the "Not In Our Name" (NION) coalition. Interestingly, this comes not only from the liberals around *The Nation* but also from the rad-lib friends of Noam Chomsky in Z-net. Even the ISO has gotten some flak from its liberal and Green Party allies who want to counterpose the "war on terror" to the war on Iraq and wrap themselves in the American flag. This McCarthyite

witchhunting is the logical outcome of the nature of this class-collaborationist movement. Rejecting a "red" struggle for socialist revolution, the parlor pinks get into trouble with their red-white-and-blue liberal allies.

"Guns vs. Butter": Popular-Front Economism and Imperialist War

The program of class collaboration is also shown in the demands raised by the various competing and cooperating anti-war groups. Currently, there are A.N.S.W.E.R., led by the WWP; "Not In Our Name," in which the RCP plays a prominent behind-the-scenes role, along with the Communist Party U.S.A., and various liberal pacifist groups. The social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO) participates in both. Despite organizational maneuvering and competition, the political differences between these Stalinist and social-democratic reformists are minimal to non-existent. All of them present one form or another of social-pacifist and social-patriotic politics.

"Not In Our Name," favors the slogan, "No Blood for Oil." Control of oil supplies certainly plays a key role in the looming invasion of Iraq, and a lesser role in the preceding war over Afghanistan with the oil riches of the Caspian and former Soviet Central Asia (dubbed "Pipelinenstan" by some journalist wags) in the background. For example, Democrat Clinton's 1999 war on Yugoslavia, which was ostensibly about human rights and actually about the NATO imperialists carving up Southeast Europe. It's not accident that quite a few of the liberals populating the "NION" coalition were supporters of that imperialist war. Like Jesse Jackson, they just don't like *this* war. Appealing to liberals who blanch at the thought of taking a side with the people of Iraq against U.S. aggression, the reformists leave vague the question of whose blood will be flowing massively as a result of this war. They attack the how of the war (like how much it will cost), not the "why" – imperialism, which as Lenin stressed is capitalism in its epoch of decay.

Another slogan that was prominent in the October 6 demonstration sponsored by NION in New York City's Central Park, which drew some 25,000 protesters, was "regime change begins at home." Again, at first glance this may seem radical,

continued on page 22

British Antiwar Train Drivers Stop Arms

The English Welsh and Scottish (EWS) railway tried to cover it up, and blame it on the weather. But on January 8 two drivers from the Motherwell train depot refused to move a freight train carrying munitions from Glasgow to the NATO Glen Douglas base on Scotland's west coast. The drivers said that believed the ammunition was destined for the British expeditionary forces in the Gulf, and as they opposed war on Iraq they would not move it.

EWS management attempted to persuade the drivers, but to no avail. The next day, another attempt to take a train of military supplies to the NATO base failed, as drivers refused to move it. Efforts to get the ASLEF railway union to ask the drivers to relent went nowhere, as the union has been actively campaigning against the war. Several Labour MPs put forward a motion in parliament hailing the drivers' action. Eventually, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) moved the ammunition by road.

While this action is modest, even the bourgeois *Guard-*

ian (9 January) recalled the London dock workers who in 1920 refused to load arms destined for opponents of the Bolsheviks onto the *Jolly George*, as well as a dockers' boycott of arms to Chile after the bloody 1973 Pinochet coup. The unions should not only defend these courageous workers against company reprisals, but also follow their example. Indeed, workers around the world should follow their lead!

Britain is decidedly a weak link in the imperialists' anti-Iraq alliance. At a recent "Stop the War Coalition" conference, a former officer in a tank regiment even evoked the 1919 mutiny of British troops in Archangel, who had been sent to Russia against the Soviets. But this popular-front coalition is dominated by the politics of perennial social-democratic "pacifist" Tony Benn and his line of pressuring Blair to pressure Bush.

The British train drivers' action underscores that it is urgent and possible to mobilize international working-class power against the imperialists.

U.S. Prepares Armageddon in Baghdad

The United States government is preparing a coldly calculated massacre in Iraq. In a confidential document ordered by United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan ("Likely Humanitarian Scenarios," 10 December 2002), which was leaked to the press last month, UN experts have calculated that there will be 500,000 casualties from a war on Iraq, at least 100,000 directly due to being hit by bombs and guns, as well as 900,000 refugees, more than 3 million in danger of starvation.

A December 2002 study by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (*War with Iraq: Costs, Consequences, and Alternatives*) calculates that a war on Iraq will cost between 99 billion dollars and 1.5 trillion dollars. According to the imperialist academics, in the "worst case scenario," the United States would occupy Iraq for ten years or more. In their "best case," the U.S. would also occupy Iraq for ten years or more. The only difference is over how much resistance there is.

War secretary Donald Rumsfeld's battle plans are intended to terrorize the Iraqi population. This time around, population centers will be the prime U.S. targets. The Pentagon plans a "devastating" aerial bombardment of Iraqi cities, after which U.S. forces will surround them, unleashing massive fire power and attempting to drive civilians out with raging fires. Concentration camps are to be set up on the perimeters to imprison the fleeing population.

Already Washington has drawn up plans for an extended period of U.S. military government, which will last more than "months," i.e., for years. The Bush administration, obsessed with "energy security," is already planning how it will use its control of Iraqi oil to destroy or dominate the OPEC oil cartel. Having their hand on the tap of the second-largest oil reserves in the world will leave the U.S. still dominant in the region, even if the Saudi Arabian tinder box blows.

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E-mail: rcorganiz@yahoo.com

For Revolutionary Opposition to Pro-Imperialist Coup Attempt in Venezuela!

*The following statement was issued by the League
for the Fourth International on December 13.*

For the past 12 days, Venezuela has been hit by a work stoppage organized by the employers' federation and right-wing military officers, with the aid of the anti-communist leadership of the main union federation (CTV), aimed at toppling the bourgeois populist government led by former colonel Hugo Chávez. This is a thinly disguised attempt at a coup d'état, the fourth time in the space of a year that the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie have attempted to bring down the regime in order to protect their corrupt sinecures, prevent an extremely limited land reform and cut off oil supplies to Cuba.

The coup attempt is clearly orchestrated by U.S. imperialism, which wants to assure its oil supplies (Venezuela is a major exporter to the United States) as it prepares to launch an invasion of Iraq, and would like to get rid of a regime which doesn't always toe the U.S. foreign policy line. The CTV tops have long been connected with the U.S. "AFL-CIA" anti-communist labor operations in Latin America, notably in toppling the popular-front Allende government in Chile. Washington financed and supported a similar coup attempt last April, which briefly removed Chávez only to be undone by a mass mobilization of workers and poor people throughout the country and opposition from within the military itself.

The League for the Fourth International has put forward the following watchwords for Trotskyist intervention in the Venezuelan crisis.

For a class-struggle mobilization of the workers and all the exploited against the bosses' coup/work stoppage!

*Defeat the oil coup - Defend Iraq against imperialist war -
Defend Cuba against internal and external counterrevolution!
Form workers councils to organize supplies of necessary*



March by Chávez supporters, workers and poor in opposition to the bosses' work stoppage, January 3.

goods for the population and revolutionary resistance to the pro-imperialist coup attempt!

For workers control of shut-down companies and plants – throw out the bosses!

Forge class-struggle union leaderships, independent of military tutelage – Defeat the imperialist puppets who are using the CTV in the interests of the counterrevolutionary employers!

For joint struggle in the streets to rout the employers' coup attempt – No confidence in the bourgeois military Chávez government and the officer corps – For the formation of workers militias!

Forge a revolutionary workers party which fights for a workers and peasants government and international socialist revolution! Reforge the Fourth International!

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Vote It Down and Strike!

TWU Tops Push Sellout Deal

On the evening of December 16, in an announcement clearly timed to come out right after a New York City transit union rally had dispersed, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and leaders of TWU Local 100 announced a pact. Despite Local president Roger Toussaint's vow to accept "no zeros" in a wage package, there is no pay hike in the first year (just a \$1,000 lump-sum bribe), and 3 percent each in the next two years, which will be wiped out by inflation.

Significantly, the deal eliminates the "no layoffs" clause from previous contracts. MTA negotiator Gary Dellaverson called a press conference to brag about the union concessions, "including a new layoff option," and NYC transit chief

Larry Reuter has a plan under which "as many as 3,100 employees would be laid off" (Newsday, 18 December 2002).

Democratic Party politician Basil Paterson, who was part of the TWU negotiating team, told the press that the MTA knew Toussaint "was never serious about a strike" (New York Post, 17 December 2002). NYC transit workers should vote this contract down and prepare to strike. This includes electing strike committee and mobilizing New York City labor for a *strike of all city workers*. Break with the bosses' Democratic Party to *forge a class-struggle workers party!*

We print below leaflets issued by the Internationalist Group in the days leading up to the contract deadline.

NYC Bosses Threaten National Guard Occupation

You Can't Run the Subways with Bayonets!

For a Solid Transit Strike, Mobilize All New York Labor!

DECEMBER 10 – With the December 15 contract deadline for New York City subway and bus workers looming, the ruling class has switched into high gear whipping up a fear campaign against Transport Workers Union Local 100. On Friday, December 6, multi-billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg declared that if there is a transit strike "people will die" – supposedly because of traffic congestion blocking ambulances.

Two days later, Governor George Pataki's office leaked that it was preparing to bring in the National Guard to patrol the city in a strike. In their strikebreaking zeal, the capitalist rulers would put NYC under martial law, like after the September 11 World Trade Center attack last year. "Strike Force" screamed the front page of the *New York Post* (9 December) with a photo of a rifle-toting Guardsman. Now Bloomberg and Pataki are in court to get injunctions banning a strike under New York's union-busting Taylor Law, as Mayor Rudy Giuliani did in 1999.

On Saturday, thousands of TWU members flooded into the Javits Center in Manhattan to overwhelmingly vote to authorize a strike. But the Local 100 leadership under president Roger Toussaint, elected in 2000 as part of a "reform" slate, is using this as a pressure tactic rather than gearing up the membership for all-out battle. It is looking to the Democrats in the City Council, who in turn are calling on Republican governor Pataki to intervene!

The battle of New York City transit is not some isolated local dispute, but hits at the heart of international finance capital. Without a steady supply of workers delivered every workday morning, Wall Street can't function. A solid transit strike would also wreak havoc with Bush's war on Iraq. You can bet it would quickly





Sealing the sellout: TWU leader Roger Toussaint embraces MTA chairman Peter Kalikow, December 16, and is suddenly hailed as a "labor statesman."

be placed on the National Security Council agenda.

Already the bosses' press is squawking about a "communist underground" in the subways and "Toussaint's jihad." When they portray transit strikers as "terrorists," the unions should tell the red-baiters and labor haters to go to hell. U.S. rulers are the ones who terror-bomb Afghanistan and Iraq and seek to terrorize working people, minorities and immigrants here into submission. What's needed is to *defeat the bosses' war through sharp class struggle*.

The TWU ranks must prepare for a hard battle, and they must be backed by the combined strength of the organized workers movement in New York. NYC transit workers should join in struggle with United Air Lines workers, whose union gains are threatened by court action, and West Coast dock workers who were sent back to work under the slave-labor Taft-Hartley law.

Against threats by city and state governments to use strike-breaking laws, transit workers should defiantly reply: ***You can't run the subways with bayonets!*** We say: Burn their injunctions and *turn the scab law into a dead letter*. If any transit workers or TWU leaders are arrested or fines imposed on the union, all city labor should walk out and *shred the Taylor Law!*

The Metropolitan Transit Authority's insulting contract offer amounts to a pay cut (no wage increases for two years, plus taking more from workers' paychecks for health and pension funds). The TWU should declare "*no contract, no work, no extensions – strike now!*" Make the scheduled December 16 labor march across Brooklyn Bridge to City Hall into a *mass mobilization of tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters on the first day of a strike*.

Other unions should join in active solidarity with the transit workers and tie the city's elaborate "contingency plans" in knots. The TWU is fighting for all of city labor: AFSCME is next up on the mayor's hit list. We say: *Shut down New York and keep it shut until Bloomberg, Pataki and the financiers fork it over!*

The MTA bosses are guilty of homicide. The Transit Authority's refusal to follow the most minimal safety rules, in force on all other railroads in the area, has led to repeated deaths

of transit workers. Two track workers – Joy Antony and Kurien Baby – were killed in two days last month because the MTA forced them to work without flagmen to warn approaching trains. Local 100 should have struck the system then and there. TWU militants should demand the formation of *union safety committees authorized to shut down traffic at any dangerous spot*.

The MTA is trying to loot the pensions and sock transit workers with rising health care costs. The TWU should make a non-negotiable demand that there be *full health care for all transit workers* – no "co-pays," zero deductibles – and campaign for free, quality medical care for everyone.

Transit workers complain of the Transit Authority's vicious "plantation justice" system of imposing sanctions on its employees in order to "keep them in line." Since the last contract, management has written up as many disciplinary notices as it has workers. The union should demand that *all disciplines be wiped out*.

The TWU should champion minority and immigrants' rights. The overwhelmingly black and Latino *WEP ("workfare") workers should immediately be made union members at full union-scale wages*. The union should demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*. Meanwhile, all police (such as the revenue cops) should be thrown out of the TWU and the unions: *police are the armed fist of the class enemy*, who we face on the other side of the strike barricades.

New York City rulers are trying to set the population against the transit workers union, even as they plan a whopping fare hike to \$2 a ride. The TWU could win huge popular support by aggressively demanding *free public transit*. We say: *rip out the turnstiles, train the clerks to run more trains to reduce overcrowding, and build the Second Avenue subway*.

The MTA, the mayor and the governor will plead poverty – pretty ludicrous coming from this gang of millionaires and billionaires. The entire city deficit could be paid off from Bloomberg's piggy bank. The MTA talks about "rising costs," but *what* costs are rising – it sure isn't transit workers' wages! The costs they're talking about are overwhelmingly debt service to the bankers, some \$2.3 billion a year. Some of these "loans" go back to the 1930s when the city took over the privately owned subways, and they have been paid for many times over. The TWU should demand: *repudiate the debt!*

Clearly, such a revolutionary program is not going to be won by business-as-usual business unionism, even dressed up in "reform" garb. A fighting leadership of the unions must be forged, one that breaks with the Democratic and Republican parties of capital (and second-string capitalist outfits like the Greens and the Working Families Party) and undertakes to build a *class-struggle workers party* that fights for a *workers government*.

We make the city work, and we can make it stop! The transit workers' fight is the fight of all New York City workers, minorities, immigrants and poor – that is, of the overwhelming majority of the population against the tiny minority of the filthy rich who think they are masters of the universe and can trample on everyone else. A leadership that has the program and determination to stand up to this bunch of capitalist thugs could win wide public support. *We have the power – use it!* ■

FOR ACTIVE SOLIDARITY WITH A NYC TRANSIT STRIKE!

The following motion was put forward in a leaflet by the Internationalist Group at the NYC United Federation of Teachers Delegates Assembly on December 4.

WHEREAS, the government of the City of New York under Mayor Bloomberg, with the collaboration of the City Council, has ordered hundreds of millions of dollars in service cuts, which will result in several thousand lost jobs; and

WHEREAS, the city government is gearing up for a confrontation with the entire labor movement, and has chosen NYC subway and bus workers as their first targets; and

WHEREAS, the NYC Department of Education has already issued instructions to school personnel for "contingency plans" in the event of a transit strike which are aimed at undercutting the effect of such a strike; and

WHEREAS, the Transport Workers Union, like the United Federation of Teachers, is threatened with massive fines and vicious jail sentences under the anti-union Taylor Law for exercising its elementary right to strike; and

WHEREAS, amid the war already underway against Iraq, the federal government under President Bush will likely label a NYC transit strike a threat to national security, as it already did in ordering locked-out West Coast longshore workers back to work under the Taft-Hartley slave labor law; and

WHEREAS, a strike by the TWU would be a front-line defense of all city workers, deserving of our active solidarity and participation in a common fight against the anti-labor offensive;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT the United Federation of Teachers urges its members to join TWU strike lines on the first and all subsequent days of a New York City transit strike, turning them into mass pickets;

THAT the UFT help initiate an immediate citywide mobilization of all NYC workers in the Wall Street or Midtown areas to demonstrate active solidarity with a transit strike;

THAT the UFT instruct its members not

to use any scab transportation instituted by the city to break a transit strike, such as vans or private buses;

THAT the UFT encourage teachers to take their classes to TWU picket lines to provide students with education in the class struggle, with instructional aids such as portable blackboards and cameras to document any arrests;

THAT the UFT inform the Department of Education that the vast majority of teachers and school workers in the NYC city schools will not be able to reach their jobs in the event of a subway and bus strike for lack of public transportation caused by the refusal of the MTA to meet the transit workers' just demands;

THAT the UFT further inform the city that if any teacher or other school worker is disciplined or dismissed for being unable to reach their job due to a strike, the union chapter at that school shall be authorized to immediately walk out in protest and to stay out until any sanctions are rescinded; and

THAT in the event that transit workers, school workers and/or union officials are jailed under the Taylor Law or other anti-labor injunction or decree, that the UFT itself strike against such scab laws demanding that all unionists be released and charges against them dropped. ■



Jean-Loup Gautreau/AFP

Parents and teachers held classes on picket lines during 1997 French truckers' strike.

Screw Mayor Mike – For a Solid Transit Strike!

The Fight for a Class-Struggle Leadership in NYC Transit

DECEMBER 16 – The December 15 contract deadline for New York City bus and subway workers came and went, but the transit showdown continues. With the entire NYC population on pins and needles after a week of non-stop anti-strike hysteria in the media, shortly before midnight Transport Workers Union Local 100 secretary-treasurer Ed Watt went before the TV cameras to announce that the negotiators had “stopped the clock” to continue bargaining. Watt said that “progress has been made primarily in the non-economic areas of dignity and respect for our members.” In other words, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority still hasn’t moved from its provocative “double-zero” proposal for a two-year wage freeze, plus \$1,500 per worker in pension and health care givebacks from the union!

In the last several days there has been a lot of talk about “respect” to cover up the fact that the MTA is hardlining it on the money, and everything else. Two days in a row, the haughty anti-union voice of the city’s rulers, the *New York Times*, ran articles saying that “Respect, Just a Little Bit, Has Become the Underlying Issue” for transit workers. But with all the talk of R-E-S-P-E-C-T, the fact is that the Transit Authority, Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Pataki are all giving transit workers the big Dis. The press is demonizing TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint as if he was a card-carrying member of Bush’s “Axis of Evil.” The ruling class is preparing as if for civil war, putting 12,000 cops on strike duty, holding televised police training sessions at Shea Stadium in carrying out mass arrests, and leaking plans to bring in the National Guard to put the city under lockdown.

The clear intention is intimidation. The MTA went to court and got an injunction against the union under the anti-strike Taylor Law, which would dock transit workers two days’ pay for every day on strike. Meanwhile, the city has its own suit to hit the union with a \$1 million fine on the first day of the strike, and \$25,000 for each individual member, doubling the fines every day, plus \$5 million in “damages” to cover the city’s strike preparations. And meanwhile the multi-billionaire “Mayor Mike” tries to get himself a “man of the people” image by going out and buying a \$663 mountain bike! The union leadership, meanwhile, keeps repeating that it has been doing everything it can to avoid a strike, which is unfortunately true.

What should have been happening is to prepare the 34,000 New York transit workers and all of city labor for an all-out strike battle. Expose the MTA’s pleas of poverty by demanding to *open the books!* An *elected strike committee* should be formed to organize mass picketing in every borough, to shut

down every transit barn and TA headquarters at Jay Street, Brooklyn. There should be a *mass labor mobilization to tie up Manhattan’s financial district* and bring the machinery of U.S. capitalism to a screeching halt. The TWU and other transit unions should declare that they will *shut down Metro North, LIRR and PATH commuter railroads as well as private bus lines* in a transit strike. As thousands of union supporters stream over Brooklyn Bridge this afternoon, they should be chanting: “*Screw Mayor Mike! For a Solid Transit Strike!*” And then turn that chant into reality.

New Directions and Rank and File Caucus: Out-Bureaucrats Are Now In

What’s needed, in short, is hard class struggle against an implacable foe. The main obstacle to such a struggle is precisely the labor bureaucracy which, day in and day out, seeks to conciliate the working class with its capitalist exploiters, the class enemy. Even if they are occasionally forced to call a strike by management’s intransigence, the union tops do so at best in a half-hearted way, fearing that an all-out struggle that unleashed the tremendous power of labor would soon sweep them out of their privileged positions. When the going gets tough, they will drop their empty rhetoric and shove sellout deals down the throats of the membership. It’s necessary to forge a fighting leadership of the unions on a program of intransigent class struggle, against the class collaboration of the present pro-capitalist misleaders who hogtie the unions.

The present “reform” leadership of Local 100 was elected in 2000 in reaction against the contract sellout of December 1999 by the previous leadership under Willie James, a placeholder for TWU International president Sonny Hall. Roger Toussaint was elected Local 100 president at the head of a slate of candidates of the New Directions caucus, which had organized a strong base of support over a decade of opposition activity. ND was supported by a host of left groups, and incorporated the Hell on Wheels opposition caucus politically associated with Solidarity, a loose social-democratic tendency, and the *Labor Notes* magazine in Detroit. But while ND would periodically strike a militant posture, it was in reality a lash-up of out-bureaucrats trying to get in on the action.

Over the years New Directions never actually called for and fought for a transit strike. As a caucus of bureaucrats and aspiring bureaucrats, their only aim was to get themselves elected to replace the Hall/James gang. Moreover, ND’s entire

Break with the Democrats – For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Bill Turnbull/Daily News



Outside Shea Stadium, cops practice strikebreaking tactics, December 12. Cops out of the unions!

strategy was to appeal to the capitalist courts and the government against the union. In 1994, New Directions sued Local 100 for \$12 million and got a court order to force the TWU to mail out its leaflet with the election ballots. When NDer Tim Schermerhorn narrowly lost to James in 1997, they forced a new election by threatening another suit. In 1998, ND sued again, to demand that e-board members be consulted in contract negotiations. In December 1999, when New York City and state authorities obtained anti-strike injunctions, ND spokesman Toussaint, then head of the Local 100 track division, kept saying, "We are confident that we will defeat this in court."

Telling workers that they can be "confident" of beating the capitalist rulers in the capitalist courts is spreading dangerous illusions. Even worse, by appealing to the courts against the union, *New Directions has repeatedly called on the class enemy to use its repressive apparatus against the workers movement.* Any class-conscious worker would be duty-bound to denounce this blatant violation of the basic principle of labor independence from the capitalist state.

Unsurprisingly, once in office, ND began acting just like its predecessors. Toussaint, who himself had been unjustly fired by the TA with the connivance of the James leadership of the TWU, brought trumped-up charges in the union against prominent Hell on Wheels supporter Naomi Allen, the vice chairman of Local 100's Car Equipment Division. (Her conviction was eventually overturned an appeals committee of the TWU International.) While Toussaint has more frequently held union rallies, he has consistently shied away from a strike. When 1,500 local members at the private Queens Surface, Triboro Coach and Jamaica Bus companies went on strike last summer, Toussaint made it clear to the press that he never wanted a strike in the first place. (He also opposed an earlier walkout in January.) This led the Queens private bus drivers' leaders, allies of Sonny Hall, to push for a breakaway from Local 100, a reactionary move that was roundly

defeated in a referendum.

Now on the outs with Toussaint, the disappointed social democrats formerly around Hell on Wheels have put out a new publication, the *Rank and File Advocate*, which claims to uphold the program of the "old" New Directions before it took power. One of its leaders, Steven Downs, who was a founder of ND and elected on its slate to the Local 100 executive board, complained that in the December 2000 elections, "most of the literature for the local-wide campaign had a bland, generic 'good unionism' feel to it" while claiming vaguely that "many of the New Directions officers, as well as its rank and file activists, continue to hold a vision of unionism that goes beyond simply providing a better service to the members" (*Labor Notes*, February 2001). What that "vision" is these "rank-and-file" bureaucrats coyly leave unsaid.

The 34,000 members of Transport Workers Local 100 have the power to shut down New York City. The last time around, the *Wall Street Journal* (16 December 1999) commented that "Wall Street tycoons and media bigwigs cringe in anticipation of a strike by New York City transit workers." No matter how massive the city rulers' strike preparations, they would only be able to move a small fraction of the 3.5 million daily transit riders on scab buses. But a hard strike battle is necessarily political, and it must be waged on a class-struggle program. *The Democrat friends of the courts and cops are the enemies of labor and the oppressed.*

The New Directions leadership has pursued the political agenda of its predecessors. In the fall of last year, Toussaint endorsed Democrat Mark Green for mayor, and campaigned with Senator Clinton. This year Local 100 backed Democrat Carl McCall for governor, while much of NYC labor officialdom crossed over to support Republican Pataki. The TWU International endorsed Bush's "war on terrorism" over Afghanistan and the Local 100 leadership has not made a peep of protest against the looming



The 34,000-strong Transport Workers Union Local 100 is powerhouse of NYC labor. Union members march across Brooklyn Bridge, December 16, shortly before pact was announced.

invasion of Iraq. Yet U.S. imperialism's wars on these semi-colonial countries are intimately connected to the capitalists' escalating war "at home" against unions, minorities and immigrants. *A class-struggle leadership of the powerful transit workers union would fight to defeat the bosses' war and break with the bosses' parties, to forge a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government.*

Every Class Struggle Is a Political Struggle

In any serious battle you need to know who your friends and who your enemies are, and a New York transit strike would be a real class battle. A revolutionary leadership would sharply draw the class line. No more capitalist politicians on labor platforms. No more representatives of the police and detectives "unions," either! We say: *cops out of the unions* – they are the armed fist of the class enemy. New Directions moaned about the "oppressed" Transit Property Protection Agents; we say throw them out of the TWU! On the other hand, the WEP employees are fellow workers. Class-struggle unionists must demand an end to this "Worker Exploitation Program" and enroll those already working in transit into the TWU. A crucial strike demand must be *full union-scale wages, benefits and protections for WEP workers*. And since most WEP workers are women, as are many present TWUers, the demand for *free 24-hour daycare near transit locations* is key. In an industry with many foreign-born workers, the union must demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*.

TWUers should demand *full pay for Helpers*, and *all provisionals should be made permanent*. Safety is a key issue in transit. Every time there is a subway crash or bus accident, managers rush to the scene to blame the drivers. Next they test the workers for drugs and alcohol. These, as well as "random" tests, are simply a way of victimizing workers, when accidents are most often the result of badly deteriorated safety conditions due to lack of maintenance. Transit workers should demand an *end to*

all drug/alcohol testing and the establishment of *union safety committees with the power to shut down unsafe operations*. With the greatly increased ridership and as part of a fight for *union jobs for all* in the face of continued heavy unemployment in the ghettos and barrios, the TWU should demand increased service and thousands of new jobs through *a shorter workweek with no loss of pay*, with all hiring to be done through a *union hiring hall*. Rather than the low-wage "apprenticeship" program, there should be *union-run training programs at full pay*.

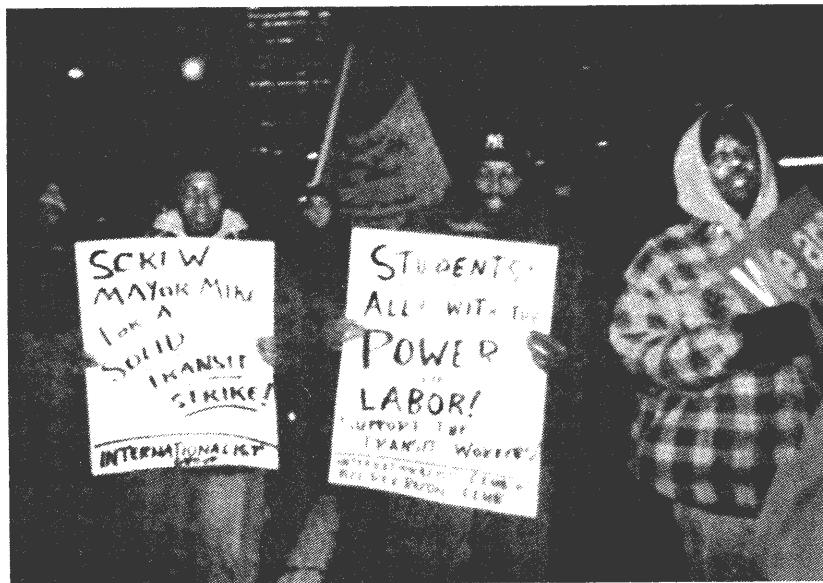
A class-struggle opposition would fight for the independence of labor from the capitalist state in every way. An important issue in the TWU is the dues check-off. Business unionists see this as an important gain, but by handing control over the union's finances to the employer (who deducts union dues from workers' pay), it gives the class enemy a powerful hold over labor. The MTA bosses used this stronghold after the defeat of the 1980 strike, cutting off the TWU's funds as

part of the penalty for losing. A union that depends on the employer for its finances is always subject to blackmail. A union that collects its own dues is better prepared to fight. The transit workers' struggle must be that of all working and poor people. Instead of simply opposing a fare increase, as the TWU leadership is now doing, the union can win broad support for a strike by demanding *free mass transit – rip out the turnstiles!* Instead of each sector of city workers bargaining separately, and getting picked off one by one, a transit strike should lead to a *citywide strike of municipal workers* that would bring out the power of labor to *shut New York down*.

Forge a Revolutionary Leadership of the Working Class!

The bankruptcy of New Directions and its social-democratic hangers-on has been demonstrated repeatedly in the TWU. In Local 100, there is a small grouping around the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) which in 1999 did call for a strike and criticize New Directions. However, its criticisms are essentially tactical, and its own program is just as *economist* as that of the current and past leadership of the union. An August 1999 leaflet by Eric Josephson, who is supported by the LRP, headlined "Willie Said 10% Yearly Raise: Let's Win It!" This year, the LRP-supported *Revolutionary Track Worker* (6 December) declared: "President Toussaint raised the contract slogan 'Second Class No More!' We have to show that we mean it and will accept nothing less than a *First Class Contract*." So here we have ostensible socialists calling to carry out the alleged programs of James and Toussaint!

The LRP's transit program comes down to wage militancy, and at bottom it aims to pressure the bureaucracy, not oust it. Its recent *RTW* says nothing about free health care, only that there should be "no new or increased payments." It says nothing about abolishing the fare, only "no transit fare hike or service reductions." It calls for an end to "plantation justice," as does



Internationalist photo

Left: Multibillionaire NYC mayor Mike Bloomberg buys \$633 mountain bike, trying to whip up union-busting atmosphere. "Mike's bike" soon became object of general derision. **Right:** Militant transit workers marched across Brooklyn Bridge December 16 chanting, "Shut Up Mike, Ride Your Bike!"

the Toussaint leadership, but raises no specific demands. And even though Josephson is now a vice-chairman of the Track Division of Local 100, following the recent MTA killings of two transit workers, the *RTW* wrote that "with blood on their hands," the TA "rushed to implement most of our demands," and they only lamented that "two Local 100 members had to die to win a few of our safety demands." Not a word about union safety committees to shut down unsafe operations.

It's not surprising, then, that the latest *RTW* paper says nothing about Local 100's alliance with the Democratic Party, or about the imperialist war on Iraq. *There's nothing revolutionary about the Revolutionary Transit Worker.* A more honest title would be "Reformist Transit Bureaucrat." Despite their occasional criticisms of New Directions, Josephson was elected to his position as a union official in a campaign in which the LRP gave "critical support" to the ND slate. The "criticism" is simply a left cover for the LRP's own capitulations. Although the LRP occasionally criticizes New Directions and a similar reformist outfit, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, for suing the unions, it does not reject this class treachery *on principle*. In an article about a South African group it was courting, the LRP wrote:

"Revolutionaries cannot absolutely rule out that there may arise exceptional and extreme situations under which using the courts in a union struggle may be necessary, in order to survive an attack and to live to fight another day."

—*Proletarian Revolution* No. 57, Summer-Fall 1998

Shades of those pseudo-socialists who find "tactical" reasons to cross picket lines! In contrast, Trotskyists defend unions led by pro-capitalist bureaucrats against attacks by the capitalist state, insisting that labor must clean its own house. The union belongs to the workers, and even under sellout leadership it must be defended tooth-and-nail against the class enemy, who with their sugary talk of "democracy" want to gut the mass organizations of the working class.

In 1999, the LRP didn't confine itself to pressuring the labor bureaucracy. Interviewed on NY1 local television, Josephson protested the lousy contract and the "police state measures, reminiscent of Stalinist Russia or Nazi Germany, and to my mind flagrantly unconstitutional." This sums up the LRP's outlook as a social-democratic current whose lineage goes back to the Stalinophobic tendency of Max Shachtman (as did the leadership of Solidarity). Shachtman deserted from Trotskyism on the eve of World War II refusing to defend the Soviet Union against imperialism. (The Trotskyists defended the Soviet degenerated workers state while fighting for a political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy.) So here in the middle of the transit showdown, the Stalinophobic Shachtmanite LRP grotesquely equated the Soviet Union with Nazi fascism, which obliterated the workers movement and carried out the Holocaust, setting as its measuring rod the bourgeois U.S. constitution! The LRP tries to strike various "leftist" postures, but this is its real *anti-communist* heritage.

Another group which has published articles about New York transit is the Spartacist League. For some three decades, from the mid-1960s to the mid-'90s, the SL stood for authentic Trotskyism. During the 1980 NYC transit strike, it actively fought for a class-struggle program and leadership of the TWU, with articles, leaflets and a special supplement to *Workers Vanguard*. Recently, however, in the wake of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, it has pulled back from the struggle for revolutionary leadership in the mass organizations of the working class. The SL of today with its abstentionist politics represents a variety of what Trotsky called "left centrism," mouthing revolutionary phrases that are not translated into action while capitulating to sections of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie.

In 1999, during the weeks before the contract deadline, the SL struck a militant tone, declaring "NYC Transit Workers: You Have the Power, Shut Down the City!" and calling "For Class-

Struggle Leadership! For a Solid Strike!" (*WV* No. 724, 26 November 1999). But when a Brooklyn judge rubber-stamped the draconian city/state injunctions against a TWU strike, the SL suddenly shifted its tune. "Defend Labor's Right to Strike!" headlined a December 14 Spartacist leaflet which pointedly *never called for a strike*. This omission was no fluke. Instead the leaflet advocated: "The key is unleashing the power of the multiracial labor movement in New York City in mass, militant action in a thought-out way, one which minimizes the damage in terms of jail sentences and other consequences." In its December 14 leaflet even the Shachtmanite LRP called for a strike, but the ostensibly Trotskyist SL *dropped* this hot potato.

The SL leaflet said that the ruling class "is outlawing the right to strike. If you don't have the right to strike, you don't have unions!" adding: "Without the right to act as a union, the plain consequence of Giuliani's action would be to make the only recourse ineffective guerrilla struggle." This panicked cry was a subterfuge. *The right to strike for civil service workers and their unions has been outlawed in New York state at least since the Condon-Wadlin Act was passed in 1947!* The SL bowed to Giuliani's *diktat*. NYC corporation counsel Michael Hess told the press that it was illegal for anyone to "threaten, encourage or advocate a strike." NY1 reporter David Lewis spelled it out: "According to city lawyers, if you were marching in that rally today [15 December 1999], whether you were a union member or just a supporter, here's how you could talk about the possibility of a transit strike: you could say, 'The transit workers really ought to have a right to strike, we ought to get that law changed.' But if you said, 'The transit workers should go out on strike,' it could cost you a lot of money." The SL followed the rules.

Recently, a lengthy article titled "New York Transit Workers vs. Union-Busting Austerity" in *Workers Vanguard* (29 November) raised a series of demands on safety, health care, the Democratic Party, the Taylor Law and other issues relevant to the transit struggle, *but pointedly did not call for a strike*. Yet the next issue of *WV* (13 December) headlined: "For a Solid NYC Transit Strike!" What changed in the meantime to cause this shift? What changed is that the weekend before, Local 100 held a mass meeting of thousands of TWU members who overwhelmingly voted to authorize a strike. In these circumstances, for the SL not to call for a strike would ostentatiously place it to the right of the Local 100 leadership, which would be too hard for these centrist ex-Trotskyists to sell while still maintaining a pretense of revolutionary politics. So for now they are for a strike ... unless Bloomberg can get a judge to outlaw advocating it, as Giuliani did.

The Spartacist League no longer fights for revolutionary leadership *within* the unions, the principal mass organizations of the working class. To take one glaring example, the latest *WV* calls for cops out of the union. But have supporters of the policies of the SL fought *inside the union* for the ouster of the Transit Property Protection Agents in the TWU? *WV* does not say so, and we venture to say they have not done so.

Or take another important case: that of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The Spartacist League calls for working-class action to free this courageous radical black journalist on Pennsylvania's death row, as do the Internationalist Group and the other sections of the League for the Fourth International. The TWU is a

key union with the muscle that could really make a difference in the fight for Mumia's freedom. Mumia himself, who is a member of the National Writers Union, wrote a column defending the TWU's right to strike. TWU Local 100 is on record calling for a "new trial" for Jamal, a liberal demand which implies confidence in the bourgeois state's legal system. But while our comrades in the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil have successfully fought for unions and labor federations there to undertake strike action and work stoppages demanding Mumia be freed – *defeating* reformist attempts to call for a "new trial" instead of for Jamal's freedom – have SL supporters fought in the TWU for the union to raise the call to free Mumia, and to undertake strikes or work stoppages for that demand? Again, thundering silence from *WV*.

In the 1938 founding program of the Fourth International (the Transitional Program), Leon Trotsky wrote:

"The Bolshevik-Leninist stands in the frontline trenches of all kinds of struggles, even when they involve only the most modest material interests or democratic rights of the working class. He takes active part in mass trade unions for the purpose of strengthening them and raising their spirit of militancy. He fights uncompromisingly against any attempt to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state and bind the proletariat to 'compulsory arbitration' and every other form of police guardianship – not only fascist but also 'democratic.' Only on the basis of such work within the trade unions is successful struggle possible against the reformists, including those of the Stalinist bureaucracy."

The Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International of which the IG is a section continue the Trotskyist program of fighting to oust the bureaucratic labor lieutenants of capital and build a class-struggle leadership in the unions through the struggle for the class independence of labor from the capitalists' state and their parties. We address key class conflicts such as the showdown over New York transit in our effort to forge a revolutionary workers party that can join the factory with the ghetto and barrio, mobilizing the power of the working class as the vanguard of all the oppressed fighting for liberation through international socialist revolution. ■

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An Internationalist Group Pamphlet

December 1987

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New York City Teachers, Transit:

Mobilize Workers' Power Against the War on Iraq!

The following motion was put forward in a leaflet by the Internationalist Group at the NYC United Federation of Teachers Delegates Assembly on December 4.

Following Washington's attack on Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 and while the occupation of that country continues under a puppet government installed by the United States and its NATO allies, the U.S. government has now decided to launch a full-scale invasion of Iraq. In the face of imperialist aggression against this semi-colonial country, Iraq must be defended by the international workers movement. The war on Iraq is also a war on working people, immigrants and minorities in the United States, and it must be defeated through militant class struggle "at home" and abroad.

The ongoing war on Iraq has never stopped since the first Gulf War of 1990-91. United Nations "inspections," allegedly searching for "weapons of mass destruction," are a ploy to trigger the war. It is the United States and its Israeli ally who have vast arsenals of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and are prepared to use them, as the U.S. has done before. Saddam Hussein is an enemy of the workers movement, who was supplied by the CIA with lists of communists, union and minority group leaders to be eliminated, and by the Pentagon with chemical weapons to be used against Iran. The U.S. is directly responsible for Hussein's war crimes, which pale in comparison with the slaughter carried out by the U.S. in Vietnam, Korea, Japan and the death-squad regimes it has installed throughout Latin America.

Around the world and in the United States, hundreds of thousands have marched to protest this war. Resolutions have been passed by labor bodies lamenting the sacrifice of domestic social programs in favor of the war drive. This is not an issue of spending priorities, of "guns vs. butter," but of horrendous war crimes and the U.S. drive for total world domination. It must be fought by mobilizing powerful working-class action internationally, including labor boycotts of war material and workers strike action against the war.

In the United States, West Coast ILWU longshore workers have been forced back to work under the strike-breaking Taft-Hartley Act in the name of the "war effort." The U.S.A. Patriot Act and other "anti-terrorism" measures are spearheading a full-scale assault on civil liberties, union and minority rights, and democratic rights generally. "Racial profiling" has become rampant, thousands of immi-

grants have been held incommunicado for months without charges, while police spying on protesters has escalated sharply.

The war directly affects teachers, students and other school workers in New York City and everywhere. Under the "No Child Left Behind" Act, Pentagon recruiters are demanding lists of names, addresses and phone numbers of high school seniors so that they can be pressured into the military. But this has been met with resistance. This Assembly salutes the students of Bushwick HS and Bushwick Outreach Center in Brooklyn who have rallied against this attempt to turn students into cannon fodder, as well as school workers who have refused to turn over names. Several thousand NYC students marched against the war last month. UFT chapters should defend, and UFT legal staff should provide representation for any students victimized for participation in protests against the war.

Despite widespread opposition to the war on Iraq and protest resolutions by local and state union bodies, the national AFL-CIO and American Federation of Teachers leaders have lined up for the imperialist war. While the Republican Administration has relentlessly demanded war, the Democratic majority Senate also voted war powers to President Bush. Democrats were the first to call for the new "Homeland Security" Department, and have been in the forefront of calls to militarize the docks. Thus the fight against the war on Iraq must also be directed against the sellout labor bureaucracy and for breaking with all the capitalist parties to form a class-struggle workers party. ■



IG at November 20 New York student march against Iraq war.

Equal Language Rights for All! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

Defend Bilingual Education Against Racist Attack!

The nationwide campaign against bilingual education is escalating. This past November, two states had a reactionary referendum on the ballot outlawing programs with classroom instruction in non-English languages. In Colorado, Amendment 31 was defeated, but in Massachusetts Question 2 was passed, by a record 70 percent. The hotly debated Massachusetts initiative called for replacing the state's bilingual program with a one-year English "immersion" program. Ominously, the ballot measures called to sue teachers, even jail them, for using any language other than English in the classroom. Not only bilingual teachers but English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors are targeted, and the immigrant-bashers are also going after teachers unions. The racist attack on bilingual ed goes together with the detentions of thousands of immigrants following the 11 September 2001 World Trade Center attack, and underscores the urgent need for the workers movement to mobilize in defense of immigrants' rights.

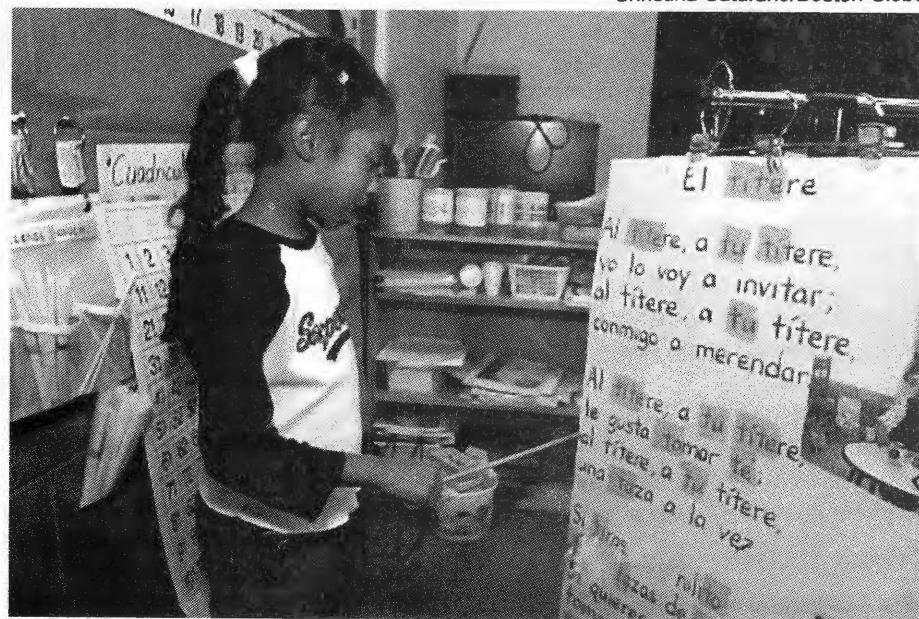
This new offensive has nothing to do with theories on how best to educate children and everything to do with a national chauvinist onslaught against "foreigners." The referendum was financed in large part by Silicon Valley millionaire Ron Unz, the xenophobic software magnate who bankrolled the "English Only" drive against bilingual education in California (Proposition 227) and in Arizona (Proposition 203). Unz feeds on racist stereotypes and whips up nativist hysteria with articles such as his piece "California and the End of White America" in *Commentary* (November 1999). At the height of the post-9/11 anti-terrorist frenzy, Unz wrote an Internet article for the far-right

National Review (26 October 2001) denouncing theorists of bilingual education as "tiny groups of educational terrorists in our midst." Earlier, Unz referred to bilingual teachers as "human vampires." Now he is pushing for national legislation banning bilingual education and taking aim at New York.

While Unz is the spearhead for the drive against bilingual ed, behind him are the racists in the White House and halls of Congress. George Bush's 2001 "No Child Left Behind" Act is the major force attacking bilingual education in U.S., eliminating Title VII, which was passed in 1968 in response to pressure from minority and immigrant communities. And as James Crawford, the liberal educational reformer and former Washington editor of *Education Week*, wrote in "Obituary: The Bilingual Ed Act 1968-2002" (*Rethinking Schools*, Summer 2002): "Liberal Democrats made little effort to block the transformation of the Bilingual Education Act into the English Language Acquisition Act. Not a single member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, once a stalwart ally of Title VII, voted against the legislation."

Behind the battle over bilingual education is the dramatic rise in immigration to the U.S. over the last two decades. In the 2000 census, 11.2 percent of the total U.S. population was

Christina Caturano/Boston Globe



Six-year-old practices reading during bilingual class at elementary school in Framingham, Massachusetts, November 2002. Question 2 aimed at forcing her into English "immersion" program.

foreign-born, some 30 million people, up sharply from 4.7 percent two decades earlier. If you include children of immigrants born in the U.S. and the considerable number of undocumented workers, the actual figures are far higher. This is possibly the highest level of immigration in modern U.S. history, and certainly the highest since the 1920s. Today there are several new elements. For one thing, there

are sizeable areas of homogeneous non-English-speaking populations. In southern California, the Southwest and most metropolitan areas, there are huge tracts where Spanish is the predominant language. Also, immigrants are now present in "heartland" areas of the Midwest and Deep South. From North Carolina to Nebraska, workers in many meatpacking and poultry plants are now predominantly Latino and Asian. Indeed, whole sectors of the U.S. economy depend on low-wage immigrant workers, and this is unlikely to change in the near future.

As in the '20s, the growth of immigration has been accompanied by anti-immigrant hysteria, from Ku Klux Klan attacks and vigilante "border patrols" to a raft of state and national legislation against immigrant rights. The xenophobes are terrified that the United States is becoming a multilingual country. The idea that English will no longer be the dominant language in the U.S. is a paranoid fantasy driven by racist fears. Thousands of immigrants are turned away from English classes because every slot is filled. In fact, English is the overwhelmingly predominant language internationally in commerce and every other field, reflecting the dominance of U.S. imperialism. Moreover, the U.S. capitalist economy owes much of its relative strength to this large-scale immigration, in contrast to its imperialist rivals of Europe and Japan, where the population is either stagnant or falling. But it is certainly true that with millions of new foreign-born residents, the United States is becoming more ethnically and linguistically diverse. This is a good thing. What the nativist racists fear, proletarian internationalists greet.

The Internationalist Group demands: *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No discrimination against any language! Defend bilingual education against racist assault! For worker-immigrant defense against racist attacks!*

Battle Lines Drawn in Massachusetts

While the anti-bilingual education referendum passed at the polls in Massachusetts, that has not ended resistance to this anti-immigrant drive. Question 2 was opposed by groups includ-

Town Meeting Against Ban on Bilingual Ed (Amherst, Massachusetts, December 9)



Packed town meeting at Amherst, Massachusetts, 9 December 2002, to demand that statewide ban on bilingual education not be applied to their schools.

ing faculty, graduate employees and campus workers unions at University of Massachusetts, teachers unions in Boston and elsewhere in the state, and activists from the Asian and Latino communities. While the ballot question passed by a majority of nearly three-to-one in the state, a poll of Latino voters showed them virtually unanimous (92 percent) in opposition, while the Asian vote in Boston was 67 percent against Question 2. The measure failed in Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, Brookline and Newton, as well as 15 communities in western Massachusetts. In the college town of Amherst, people were up in arms over the issue and a jam-packed town meeting on December 9 voted to seek an exemption to the state law.

The implementation of some of the specific measures is now an open question. The law is not scheduled to go into effect until school starts next September. Republican gover-

Photos: Jeremy Roberts/Daily Hampshire Gazette

nor Mitt Romney pretended during his election campaign that he would kill the “sue teachers” provisions, but now says “he opposes any effort to gut the new law” (*Standard-Times* [New Bedford], 18 December 2002). “Dozens of bills have been filed on Beacon Hill, seeking to curb or roll back the initiative,” the paper reports. Some school systems are seeking waivers and a few school administrators have said that they would defy the law. One educator remarked, “a few well-organized single-school sit-ins would alter the atmosphere considerably.” That would help, but what’s really needed is for teachers and students to take mass defiant action, and for labor to mobilize its power to defend its many immigrant members against this racist attack. *Out of the schools and into the streets, and let the state try to jail hundreds of teachers, students and trade-unionists!*

The backers of the drive against bilingual education are all-purpose reactionaries. One of the most prominent is Boston University chancellor John Silber, a notorious right-wing attack dog. His particular target is teachers unions: “The teachers union is working hard to perpetuate these jobs” and is “trapping” children in a “linguistic ghetto” (*Boston Herald*, 14 March 2002). As president of BU in the 1980s, Silber broke a bitter faculty strike and turned the university into a conduit for Reaganite Cold War schemes. In 1984 he was named to the Kissinger Commission on Central America, which called for funneling millions to the Nicaraguan contra terrorists. In 1986, he got hundreds of thousands of dollars from the U.S. Information Agency to train anti-Soviet Afghan *mujahedin* (holy warriors) as “journalists.” In a McCarthyite red-baiting campaign, a former Communications College dean who objected to the Afghan Media Project was accused of ties with the Communist Party and even linked to Alger Hiss. Perhaps Silber will inform us of how many of his Afghan protégés in this CIA-style disinformation scheme ended up with another former CIA “asset,” Osama bin Laden.

Pseudo-Science in the Service of Racist Attacks

To pump up their “academic” credentials, the “English only” crowd trot out pseudo-scientific research designed to serve right-wing reaction. The phrase “scientifically-based research models” is the new catchword used to bully educators into everything from high-stakes testing to phony phonics reading schemes. In Massachusetts, their favorite is Dr. Christine Rossell, who was named head of the BU political science department under Silber and later advised him on educational affairs when he was head of the Mass. state board of education. In a chapter in a book edited by Diane Ravitch and Joseph Viteritti, *Lessons From New York City Schools* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), Rossell writes: “Language-minority children should be taught in English.... Scientific research indicates that language minority children generally have higher achievement if they are taught in English rather than in their native tongue.” Scientific studies show nothing of the sort, and this Silberite political scientist who fancies herself an education “expert” is hardly unbiased. Rossell was co-chair of



Janet Knott/Boston Globe

Ron Unz, xenophobic software millionaire at Boston media event calling to abolish bilingual ed, July 2002.

Unz’s 2002 Massachusetts Initiative Campaign.

Rossell’s dubious “scholarship” has been exposed by leading figures in the field of ESL and bilingual education. Stephen Krashen, perhaps the leading authority in the U.S. on second language acquisition and architect of California’s bilingual education program, has devastated Rossell’s claim that immersion is better than bilingual education, as supposedly shown in “72 nationwide studies.” In a note to Eric Huber of the *Denver Post* (19 June 2002) on Huber’s article about the Colorado anti-bilingual ballot proposal, which quoted Rossell as a supposedly objective scientific expert, Krashen noted that “nearly every other researcher who has looked at the data has concluded that bilingual education has been successful.” “Only two studies in her lists were done in the U.S.,” he pointed out. Of those, the first only “showed that well organized bilingual education is better than bad bilingual education,” and the second involved only 16 children in the bilingual program and lacked any evidence, even test scores. Most of Rossell’s research consisted of comparisons of different versions of Canadian immersion programs, “really different versions of bilingual education,” designed for elite middle-class students.

In fact, the right-wing attack on bilingual education is part of a broader attack on public education as a whole. The book by Rossell and Keith Baker, *Bilingual Education in Massachusetts: The Emperor Has No Clothes* (1996), has frequently been cited as the “scientific” authority for axing bilingual ed. Yet this book is published by the right-wing Pioneer Institute which is spearheading efforts at privatizing education through vouchers and gutting virtually every other government service, from closing mental hospitals to raising MBTA mass transit fares. Pioneer is pushing Edison Schools, designed by former Yale University president (and union-buster) Benno Schmidt, and other for-profit corporations to take over public schools. It is modeled on the Manhattan Institute in New York, which

played a leading role in eliminating the remnants of open admissions at the City University by eliminating English-language "remediation programs" (see "Right Wing Yale Cabal Targets CUNY," in *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999). But while Edison just took over scores of Philadelphia schools, its test score results have been a miserable failure and its stock has gone through the floor.

It's revealing that the anti-bilingual education "experts" at this right-wing think tank are also opposed to "forced busing." Rossell and her associates recently published a treatise, *School Desegregation in the 21st Century* (Pioneer Institute, 2002), arguing, according to the publisher, that desegregation has had "serious costs – white flight and protest voting – associated with 'forced busing' and the use of strict racial quotas." An earlier book by Rossell, *The Carrot or the Stick for School Desegregation Policy: Magnet Schools or Forced Busing* (Temple University Press, 1990), argued that "voluntary" integration plans with the incentives of good schools were "more effective." That programs involving small numbers of students placed in brand-new, well-equipped and staffed schools, or like Boston's METCO plan which bused students from Roxbury and Dorchester to schools in affluent suburbs like Newton, Lexington, Lincoln and Wellesley, produced higher grades than busing to rundown schools in hostile South Boston – what is that supposed to prove? Counterposing magnet schools to court-ordered busing is artificial. If city schools were integrated *and* funded at the levels of those in the upscale white suburbs, there would be dramatic improvements in scholastic achievement across the board.

Coming out of Boston, which was the scene of the key battle for integrating northern schools, the Rossell/Pioneer tracts are the academic voice of the racist lynch mobs in Southie that attacked black school children while screaming against "forced busing." These pseudo-scientific studies are nothing but "respectable" apologies for the *resegregation* of U.S. schools. In Rossell's case, it turns out that in addition to her day job at BU, she "also works as a paid consultant to help school districts end busing" (*Standard Times*, 30 June 1996). And now they are playing the same role for the "English only" anti-immigrant racists. What was needed in the 1974 Boston busing crisis, as revolutionary Marxists demanded at the time, was to implement the busing plan, extend busing to the suburbs, eliminate the built-in discrimination of funding schools by local property taxes, and provide *integrated, free, quality public education for all*. In the face of the marauding anti-busing mobs that rampaged through Southie, while liberals and reformists looked to federal troops, the Trotskyists called for *labor/black defense of busing to crush racist attacks*. And rather than looking to the liberal Democratic Boston Brahmins, as the radlibs did, it was necessary to build a *workers party fighting for a workers government*.

Defeat the Immigrant-Bashers with Sharp Class Struggle!

The immigrant-bashers can be fought and defeated. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* (4 January), "New Testing Ads

Urgency to Bilingual Ed Battle," quotes Unz complaining of "the stubbornness of the entrenched bilingual education bureaucracy" which has meant that many California students are still enrolled in bilingual classes five years after Proposition 227 was enacted. Teachers committed to educating their students will continue to resist these laws and regulations by using every loophole they can find. But this onslaught must be fought head-on, and in doing so they can win the support of parents and students. The article reports that at a recent heated meeting of the Placentia-Yorba Linda school board, parents complained about the "English only" regulations. "I want my kids to understand what they are learning," said an angry father. "*Nosotros no somos ignorantes*," said one mother. "We are not ignorant. We know what we want for our children and we are willing to fight for our rights."

That is not to say that bilingual education doesn't have plenty of problems, just as the rest of the big urban education systems in racist, capitalist America: mired in mediocrity, hamstrung by bureaucracy, hobbled by lack of books, sometimes staffed with poorly trained teachers and financially strapped in every way. Bilingual ed also has its fair share of hare-brained "reform" schemes and fads. Some of the scandals publicized by Unz in California were actually the result of administrative scrambling to get around the huge across-the-board cutbacks mandated by the earlier Proposition 13, which slashed local school boards' budgets (e.g., Chinese kids put into bilingual Spanish-language classes because these programs still existed since they were protected by a legislative mandate). Also, in Colorado the fight against Amendment 31 last fall grotesquely relied on TV ads appealing to the same anti-immigrant racism as the anti-bilingual forces, saying that if the measure passed it would cause "chaos in the classroom" as Latino students would pour into class with "our children." As opposed to this garbage, the fight against attacks on bilingual ed must be part of an overall fight for language equality and integrated quality public education.

English "immersion" is a sink or swim program, and the obvious and predictable result is that large numbers of immigrant children will sink. The same goes for the introduction of mandatory high-stakes testing for high school diplomas, and even to get into high school (9th grade). Statistics? Try these: in New York City, where 36 percent of the population is foreign-born, where over half the students are immigrants or the children of immigrants, and where mandatory English-language tests have been imposed to get into ninth grade or to graduate, fully 31 percent of English language learners who should have graduated in June 2001 instead dropped out of school. Or more accurately, they were forced out. As an article in the *New York Times* (24 June 2002) reporting this figure headlined: "Critics Say Regents English Tests Push Immigrants to Drop Out." Nationwide, a 2001 conference organized by the Civil Rights Project of Harvard University reported that in 200 to 300 of the biggest schools in the country's 35 largest cities, *less than half* of those who enter ninth grade graduate.

Unz and his academic hacks portray bilingual education as if

it's some kind of sinecure pushed by teachers unions and Latino nationalists. Bilingual ed is an exclusively Hispanic program, they claim. This is true in some places, and emphatically not in others. In New York City there are bilingual programs in Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Russian, Korean, Bengali, Polish, Arabic, French, Urdu and Punjabi. But the fact is that the *force out* rate for Latino immigrants is staggering, 44 percent don't graduate in NYC, according to a statistical summary by Dr. Ofelia García of Columbia Teachers College ("The Languages and Literacies of Latin American Children in New York: Implications for Schooling," November 2002). Throwing children who do not speak, read or write English, who live in impoverished inner city ghettos and barrios, often in precarious family situations, into classes conducted exclusively in English where they can't even understand the words of what is being taught – which is what "English immersion" amounts to – is a recipe for purging the schools. And it is not an accidental purge.

A sector of the U.S. ruling class is concerned about controlling the effects of the massive immigration of recent years. As we noted our article, "Defeat the Capitalist Onslaught Against Public Education!" (*The Internationalist* No. 10, June 2001):

"The masters of American capitalism are intent on creating a far more sharply polarized economy, in which there will be a relatively highly paid technologically proficient petty-bourgeois layer and a mass of low-paid service workers, while industrial wages will continue to be slashed in a 'race to the bottom' in the name of competitiveness.... And along with this shift, a more sharply bifurcated, public-private educational system is being created...."

"A second element of the current 'reform' plans is *forced Americanization* of immigrant students. U.S. capitalism has attracted millions of immigrants, both legal and 'illegal,' from Latin America, Asia and Africa to provide low-wage labor.... While the bosses are eager to gouge workers by paying minimum and sub-minimum wages, they are worried about their ability to control millions of oppressed and exploited immigrants. Hence the 'crisis' over bilingual education.

"This is a totally manufactured issue. Immigrant adults and children are eager to learn English – the real problem is lack of space in courses.... The enthusiasm of [former New York mayor Rudy] Giuliani and other racists for sink-or-swim 'total immersion' programs is purely political. In addition to denying essential social services to 'illegal' immigrants, they want to break any 'foreign' cultural ties."

Numerous studies confirm that students for whom English is not their native language stay in school longer, score higher on English and other subject matter tests and have higher graduation rates if they have had some degree of instruction in their native language. The purpose of eliminating bilingual education is not to improve the education of the students, *it is to regiment them.*

Ultimately, it is to regiment them for war. During the 1991 Persian Gulf War military recruiters scoured immigrant neighborhoods looking for recruits, promising citizenship as a carrot. Today, the same 2002 "No Child Left Behind" educational "reform" act that eliminated federal funding for bilingual edu-

cation also serves as a back door to reinstating selective conscription, requiring high schools to supply names and addresses of juniors and seniors to the Pentagon. Military recruiters then put the arm on minority and working-class youth to join up, promising educational opportunities while saying little about becoming cannon fodder for the imperialist war machine. The Marine drill sergeants want the "grunts" to snap to when they bark orders at them in English, and they don't want their recruits talking to each other in Spanish, Chinese or any other "foreign" language. Just like employers who ban Navajo Indians from speaking Navajo and Mexican workers from speaking Spanish.

Forced Americanization is the program of the ruling class. That is why the xenophobic far-right opponents of bilingual education have the wind in their sails. The workers movement, in contrast, must champion the cause of immigrants. An increasing portion of the working class in the United States is foreign-born, including some of the most militant fighters in recent unionization drives. The Boston building service workers who recently won recognition for their SEIU union as part of the "Justice for Janitors" campaign are an example. The SEIU along with Massachusetts teachers unions opposed the Question 2 referendum against bilingual education. But lobbying the Democrats and sending postcards is a dead-end. This is typical of the mentality of pro-capitalist union bureaucrats, who focused on a failed effort to elect a Democratic Party governor, tying the workers to the bosses' parties. Yet a radicalized workers movement, with a class-struggle leadership, would become the greatest champion of immigrants and of oppressed black, Latino and Asian minorities.

Whenever the workers movement has seriously fought the bosses, its struggles have been marked by the fighting unity of U.S.-born and foreign-born workers. Class-conscious unionists and fighters for immigrant rights in Massachusetts can look back to the example of the 1912 Lawrence textile workers' strike, led by the syndicalist International Workers of the World (IWW). The employers had brought in Arab, Russian and East European women to toil in the Lawrence mills, and tried to keep them separated by playing on ethnic and language divisions. Women workers were in the forefront of the strike, led by the 21-year-old IWW organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and strike meetings were translated into 25 languages. In the 1919 steel strike, the bosses attacked the workers as "foreigners" and "Bolsheviks," while the workers put out leaflets in six languages calling to strike against "Czar Gary," the head of U.S. Steel, and to defend Soviet Russia.

In the Russian empire, Lenin's Bolshevik party won the leadership of the working class on an internationalist program calling for full equality of all languages. The young Soviet republic that arose from the 1917 October Revolution declared that all workers in the country would enjoy equal rights of citizenship. While the bourgeoisie seeks to divide the exploited and oppressed along national lines and meanwhile guts education for the mass of the working and poor people, the communists call for workers and oppressed people of all nations to unite in the struggle for international socialist revolution. ■

For Class War...

continued from page 5

but what's behind it is the demand that the Republican usurper Bush, who was "elected" by a 5-to-4 majority on the Supreme Court, should be replaced by a Democrat. Similarly, when all of these coalitions denounce "Bush's war," it is a clear appeal to rope in Democrats.

Yet another common denominator demand, especially favored by WWP/IAC/A.N.S.W.E.R., is "Money for Jobs, Not for War," or variants such as "Money for Schools, Not for War." Again this is an appeal to bourgeois liberals who support American capitalism, but are worried about their favorite social programs getting crowded out by the "bloated" Pentagon budget. Reformists like such slogans, because they argue that the middle class can only won over by appealing to their wallets and pocket books. So the "peace" coalitions adopt a dual marketing strategy: for the youth, "multi-culti" slogans about the plight of the Iraqis; for their parents, "butter vs. guns" social-patriotism.

The current issue of *Workers World* (16 January) is quite explicit about this, with an article titled "Guns for the Workers, Butter for the Rich." Another example of these same theme is the front for the ISO's *Socialist Worker* (8 November 2002), which proclaims: "Billions for Iraq war, tax cuts for the rich, No help for the jobless: Washington's Twisted Priorities." As if imperialist war is simply a question of budget priorities rather than *mass murder* by the U.S. bourgeoisie (and not just Bush). Perhaps the most absurd example of this utopian-reformist and economist approach to war was in the 1980s, when Socialist Action's Silvia Weinstein campaigned for childcare centers on the slogan, "It will be a great day when the schools get all the money they need, and the Navy has to hold a bake sale to buy a ship." Again, this poses the question of what their attitude would be if the government wasn't cutting social programs.



IG speaker Aubeen López at November 21 rally in NYC's Washington Square by high school students who walked out of school to protest Iraq war.

For example, Democrat LBJ fought the war on Vietnam on the program of "butter and guns," spreading around a lot of money to anti-poverty groups and launching the Medicare program.

At bottom, all these demands are what Lenin termed "social-patriotic" and "social-pacifist." In other words, they seek to channel opposition to a particular imperialist war into a dispute over the "priorities" of bourgeoisie rather than into a fight against the capitalist system which produces such wars over and over. A look at the origin of the slogan of "butter vs. guns" can help to see why this is rejected by revolutionary Marxists. In 1936, Hitler's deputy Hermann Göring, who had just been put in charge of the economic program for rearming Germany, announced at a mass meeting in the Berlin Sports Palace that the new watchword would be "*Kanonen statt Butter*" (guns instead of butter). A couple of years later, the Volksfront (Popular Front) of the Social Democrats (SPD) put out a ten-point program titled "German Freedom" calling for "Butter instead of guns." Their answer to Hitler's aggressive

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militarism, which threatened to unleash a new imperialist war, was a dispute over budget priorities.

The task of those who would fight the Nazi dictatorship drive toward war was not to argue about its spending priorities, but rather to fight for its overthrow through workers revolution, something dissident bourgeois politicians could never support. Today, the central question posed by Washington's drive toward war is not to focus on relative spending but the need to defeat the imperialists and defend Iraq through sharp class struggle. In the first Gulf War, the then-revolutionary Spartacist League raised as its central slogan, "Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!" Today it has demonstrably dropped the call to defeat "its own" bourgeoisie as part of a sharp rightward shift (see "SL Hard to Starboard," p. 41).

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have called for workers action against the war on Iraq, including labor strikes and boycotting war materiel. In contrast, the bulk of the left is intent on building a bigger, better and "broader" popular-front antiwar coalition – that is, looking to the liberals rather than to the working class. Recently a number of local unions have passed antiwar motions (Chicago teachers and Teamsters) and linking the government's anti-labor repression to the war on Iraq (Oakland longshore workers). But passing paper motions will not stop U.S. tanks – what's needed is the mobilization of the power of the workers movement directly against the war drive. The recent action by British train engineers in refusing to move a freight train loaded with munitions bound for the Gulf is an important development, which should be taken up by class-struggle militants internationally.

In the struggle against the war on Iraq by Bush and the Democrats, it is vital to build a revolutionary workers party. Such a party would be forged in sharp political struggle against the reformists who would chain opponents of imperialist war to the bourgeois Democratic and Green parties. Ultimately, the only way imperialist war can be eliminated is through endless "antiwar movements" with bourgeois politicians but through international socialist revolution led by a Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

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Defend Róger Calero!

The detention and attempted deportation of Socialist Workers Party activist Róger Calero is a dangerous attack on democratic rights. Calero, associate editor of the SWP's Spanish-language newspaper *Perspectiva Mundial* and a writer for *The Militant*, was pulled off of an airplane in Houston and detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in December. He was held for several days on his way back from carrying out a journalistic assignment in Mexico and Cuba. He was released on bond December 13 after protests by labor and immigrant rights groups, among them the St. Paul, Minnesota local of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, of which he is a former member.

Calero, who has lived in the United States for 23 years, continues to face the threat of deportation in a blatant political vendetta. The INS claims he faces deportation for a minor drug conviction in 1988, which the INS had already waived when he was given residency. The real reason for the INS's action is that Calero is an immigrant socialist, of Nicaraguan origin, returning from Cuba. The United States has waged a 40-plus year war against the Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers state, using every tactic from outright invasion to embargo to assassination attempts. During the 1960s, U.S. officials attempted to confiscate the passports of leftists going to Cuba. Today, in the name of "national security," the McCarthyite attempt to deport Calero is part of this effort to strangle the Cuban revolution.

The deportation proceedings against Calero are also part of the onslaught of repression against activists and immigrants in the "post-9/11" climate. The *New York Times* (17 November 2002) reported that "targets" are already being "electronically monitored," and that "in the event of a U.S. invasion of Iraq" the federal government would carry out "arrests and detentions of Iraqis or Iraq sympathizers" in the U.S. After a number of peace activists and supporters of Ralph Nader's Green Party had been stopped from flying at airport gates, Salon.com writer Dave Lindorff discovered that the U.S. government has set up a "no-fly" list. Approximately 1,000 people are already on this list and will be prevented from flying on U.S. airlines simply for their political beliefs. Needless to say, anyone who opposes U.S. imperialism's war on Iraq may be deemed a "threat."

Meanwhile, Democrats Joe Lieberman and Tom Daschle are pushing the Bush administration's sinister "Operation TIPS." This program, which incites the "guy or girl next door" to spy on their neighbors, co-workers or customers, would have made Hitler's Gestapo proud. Today, the cutting edge of the repressive onslaught is the "registration" of thousands of Muslim, Arab and Near Eastern men. This is akin to Roosevelt's racist internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, threatening deportation for the "crime" of being born in the "wrong" place. We demand: *Stop the deportations, stop racist "registration"! Free the detainees NOW! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

The left and labor movement must come to the defense of Róger Calero and demand an immediate end to deportation threats against him. *An injury to one is an injury to all!*

Mobilize Workers Power Against Police-State Repression!

Drop the Charges Against Amer Jubran! Free the Detainees!



Mike Shonle

Demonstrators outside JFK Federal Building, Boston, November 15.

The following leaflet was issued by the Internationalist Group on November 20. At a hearing the next day, attended by scores of protesters, Amer Jubran was released on bail. However, charges are still pending and Jubran faces a hearing in February.

BOSTON – At 8 a.m. on the morning of November 4, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) staged a Gestapo-like raid on the Cumberland, Rhode Island home of Amer Jubran. After being dragged off to the INS detention center in Providence, Jubran was transferred to an INS “intake service center” (prison) in Cranston. Jubran is a founder of the New England Committee to Defend Palestine and a leader of the Al-Awda Palestinian Right of Return Coalition. He has also been a prominent spokesman at protests called by the International Action Center (IAC) and A.N.S.W.E.R. antiwar coalition in New England. On November 2, he led a march past the Israeli consulate in Boston demanding freedom for Palestinians. Last spring, Jubran led chants in the 100,000-strong April 20 demonstration for Palestinian rights in Washington, D.C. But when his lawyer, Mike Brill, tried to find out under what charges Jubran was detained, the INS said that he was being held indefinitely pending investigation of “possible violations” of INS regulations!

The Internationalist Group vigorously denounces the detention of Amer Jubran and demands his immediate and unconditional release and the dropping of all charges against him. This is a blatant attempt to silence protest against

Washington’s imperialist war in the Near East. It comes only a few months after the arrest and torture of Palestinian rights activist Jaoudat Abouazza in Cambridge, Massachusetts. There is a clear pattern of repression against Palestinian rights protesters, part of the witchhunt against immigrants in general and Arabs in particular. This assault on the civil liberties is part of mounting police-state repression that targets minorities, labor, the left and threatens the democratic rights of the entire population. The government justifies its refusal to grant those arrested the right to a lawyer, or even to release their names, with the claim that this would aid “international terrorism.” Yet *not one person* among the more than 2,000 detained and *not one* of the hundreds of immigrants of Near Eastern origin who have been deported has ever been charged with anything to do with the 11 September 2001 indiscriminate attack on NYC’s World Trade Center.

The United States government, bent on waging an unprovoked war of extermination against the Iraqi people, will not be swayed by civil liber-



Dave Roberts

Amer Jubran speaking at protest against war on Afghanistan outside Northeastern University ROTC, 27 October 2001.

tarian and pacifist appeals. It is necessary to *defeat the imperialists* and to *defend Iraq* against the slaughter about to be carried out by the biggest state terrorists of all, Washington and its allies. The *war on Iraq* is a war on working people, minorities and immigrants in this country as well. We call on labor to take to the streets in force to demand freedom for Jubran and for all the detainees, to oppose the reactionary U.S.A. Patriot Act, the ominous Homeland Security Department and the whole array of McCarthyite witchhunting legislation. These laws were approved in "bi-partisan" votes by both Democrats and Republicans, the twin parties of American capitalism, in preparation for imposing a state of siege on the U.S. population. We Trotskyists warn that the imperialist war machine can only be stopped by mobilizing the superior strength of the workers movement, which has the power to bring the U.S. juggernaut to a grinding halt. *For class war against the imperialist war!*

Jubran's arrest is one of a series of seizures of Palestinian activists on false or nonexistent charges in order to remove them from publicly protesting the heinous Israeli repression of the Palestinian people. In each case, the intent of the INS has been to hold them indefinitely. When Jaoudat Abouazza was arrested last May, he was severely beaten by INS thugs. After Abouazza refused to cooperate with FBI interrogators, on the morning of June 16, six molars were extracted from his mouth without anaesthetic or antibiotics, while he was held down by jail guards! When a delegation of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, the Canadian consul and Abouazza's court-appointed lawyer visited him, they demanded medical records of his vicious "treatment." However, his doctor was refused permission to examine him, and the "records" turned over were incomplete and contradictory. When a judge ruled on June 27 that he should be allowed to depart voluntarily, the INS initially refused to accept the ruling. But due to mounting protests by Boston activists and the civil liberties groups, Abouazza was eventually released on his own recognizance to return to Canada, where he is a citizen.

In Jubran's case, this was the second time he has been subjected to reactionary political repression in the past two years. In June 2001, he was arrested, shackled hand and foot and held incomunicado for 36 hours by police in Brookline, Massachusetts for chanting "Long live the Intifada!" at an Israeli independence day celebration. While Jubran continued to speak at antiwar protests in Boston and Washington after September 11, local authorities eventually dropped the charges against him.

Protests over his recent jailing have already begun. On Friday, November 15, a hundred spirited militants picketed in front of the federal office building in Boston chanting "Free, free Amer Jubran!" Police stood guard inside the building to "protect" INS New England bureau chief Farquharson, a notorious right-winger. Speakers documented the illegal nature of Jubran's arrest, for which there was no warrant issued and no charges filed. Jubran's lawyer has posted bond demanding his release, and a hearing will be held at 9 a.m., November 21, at the JFK federal building. It is important that Jubran's supporters pack the courtroom in his defense. Savage police brutality, as witnessed in Abouazza's case, must be vigorously opposed, and Amer must not be subjected to jail and torture one day longer.

The Internationalist Group stands for non-sectarian defense of all class-war prisoners. We have deep differences with the IAC, in particular their appeals to Democratic Party politicians to lead "antiwar" protests, including Jesse Jackson (who led off the October 26 A.N.S.W.E.R. march in Washington, D.C. after defending the 1991 Persian Gulf War!) and IAC founder Ramsey Clark (the former U.S. attorney general during the Vietnam War who oversaw the government's murderous war against the Black Panther Party). We warn that these capitalist politicians are no friends of the Palestinian or Iraqi people. As proletarian internationalists, the League for the Fourth International, of which the IG is the U.S. section, calls to drive the Israeli army and settlers out of the West Bank and Gaza, and for Arab-Hebrew workers revolution. Politically opposing all forms of nationalism, we stand intransigently for the defense of the oppressed, and insist that *an injury to one is an injury to all*.

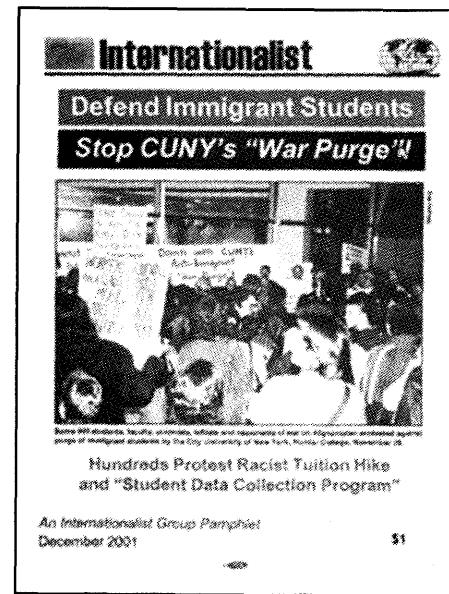
*For workers action against racist, police-state repression!
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Uproar in Antwerp Harbor

Racist Witchhunt and NATO War Moves in Belgium

On November 28, Belgium's second largest city, Antwerp, made international headlines after the racist murder of Mohamed Achraf, a Moroccan Moslem teacher. Achraf, a well-known community figure, was shot down by a Belgian neighbor in this port city; the authorities and the bourgeois press were quick to add that the murder suspect was mentally unstable.

This is exactly what they said six months ago, in May, when a sympathizer of the Vlaams Blok – the fascist party which has attracted a mass following on the basis of Flemish nationalism and racism – tried to burn the whole Isnami-El Hajj family to death, and succeeded in killing the parents. The murderer was frustrated by French fascist Le Pen's lack of electoral success in the second round of the French presidential elections.

But it was not fascists and racist murder which generated the headlines, nor the fact that a massive police intervention invaded the Borgerhout district immediately after the murder and arrested 160 immigrant youths there. The entire Belgian state machine, from Liberal Democrat (VLD) prime minister Guy Verhofstadt on down, targeted the Arab European League and its president, Lebanese-born Dyab Abou Jahjah. Police patrols assisted by helicopters combed the city to find Jahjah's car, although he was not in hiding. He was arrested, his apartment ransacked, and subsequently charged with criminal association, being an accomplice to public disorder while in possession of arms, blocking traffic, destroying vehicles and assaulting a policeman. These charges were so flimsy that Jahjah was soon released, but barred from participating in public demonstrations for three months – an open political gag order.

The AEL's "crime" was to have organized patrols "armed" with cameras, notebooks and mobile phones to observe the cops, a response to a police plan ("Plan Intégré Marocains") targeting immigrant neighborhoods in Antwerp – and more particularly Moroccan youth – based on the entirely justified fear that the cops would brutalize the victims of a racist dragnet.

Thundering against the AEL as a "criminal network," the prime minister promised "zero tolerance," telling parliament "the league is trying to terrorize the city" (*Al-Ahram Weekly* 5-11 December). Of course there is nothing illegal about

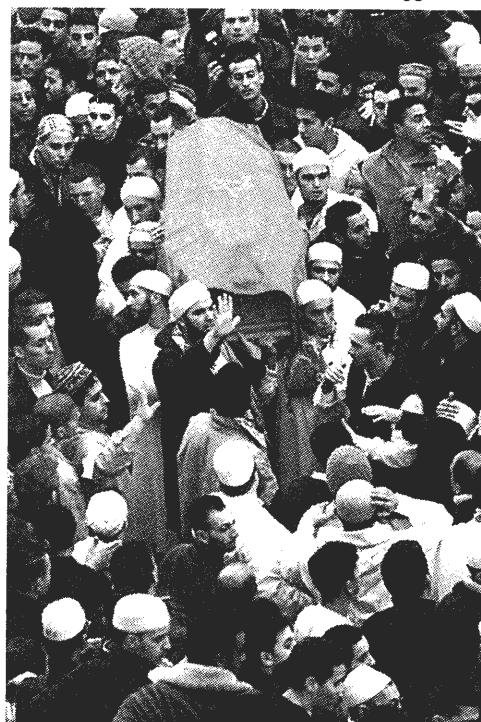
observing the cops – at least not yet, as Interior Minister Duquesne was obliged to admit. But, he said, if the AEL cannot be prosecuted under existing law, new legislation would be whipped up. The Vlaams Blok demanded the AEL be banned, a possibility raised by Prime Minister Verhofstadt as well.

As the League for the Fourth International has repeatedly underlined, the imperialist war drive has inflamed anti-Moslem racism and has been accompanied by police-state measures targeting not only immigrants but the entire workers movement. And Belgium, a linchpin of NATO, with its national division between the Flemish-speaking and French-speaking populations, and a particularly scandal-ridden police and judiciary, is no exception. Witness the hysteria generated by the AEL's simple exercise in elementary democratic rights. The organization now risks being outlawed – not only in Belgium but in neighboring Holland as well. *Hands off the AEL!*

The AEL, the Belgian Bourgeois State and the Fascists

The murder of Achraf galvanized the Moroccan community in Antwerp. There was a massive turnout for his funeral.

Yves Logghe/AP



Burial of Mohamed Achraf, 27-year-old teacher killed by racist in Antwerp, Belgium, 29 November 2002.

And the AEL, with a membership of only a few hundreds, has become a channel for outrage against racist oppression, while Jahjah (a Belgian citizen) has announced plans to run candidates in the 2003 elections.

While comparing itself with Malcolm X, the AEL is not, for example, organizing self-defense of the immigrant neighborhoods against racist terror. Naturally, the accusations by the government and its lackeys in the press about a "militia" barring police access to the neighborhood are nonsense. For its part the AEL denies it is trying to substitute itself for the police, and its observers distributed leaflets announcing "Bad cops: AEL is watching you." This is a strategy of pressure on the Belgian police, spreading the illusion that this racist bourgeois state can behave any differently.

It is hardly a question of a few "bad cops" – or even many "bad cops," since the Antwerp police is notoriously riddled with Vlaams Blok supporters. In a whole series of European imperialist

countries, police brutality has always been a response to mass immigration. In particular, immigrant youth, who have in many cases acquired formal citizenship rights, and who cannot be so easily deported despite the high unemployment in their ranks, are targets for police murder. The bourgeois state views them as part of the "dangerous classes," to be repressed at all costs. Since the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, they are increasingly branded as petty criminals and/or potential "Islamic terrorists".

Faced with the dramatic growth of the Vlaams Blok (one-third of the votes in the last municipal elections) in this city suffering from heavy unemployment, the bourgeois and reformist parties swore to carry out a "cordon sanitaire" policy, cordoning off (boycotting) these Flemish fascists. Not only is this "strategy" a hollow, token response to the fascist danger, in the witchhunt against Jahjah all differences with the Vlaams Blok, which had already called for banning the AEL, disappeared. The social democrats of the SPA (Social Progressive Alternative), who are part of the coalition government, accused the AEL of creating a "parallel force" to the state, invoking a law banning "militias" (which has left untouched the fascists' paramilitary youth groups). The Greens bleated about the "weakening of the state of law and the erosion of the social contract," even as one-fifth of the residents of Borgerhout are obliged to subsist on welfare. In reality, all parties committed to propping up decaying Belgian capitalism are also committed to the racial oppression it engenders.

Nor does the AEL really challenge this system. It is basically a bourgeois-nationalist group committed to an Islamic brand of pan-Arabism, which it presents as compatible with bourgeois democracy. While protesting the police-state measures against it, Marxists have nothing in common with the AEL's outlook. Its propaganda justifies suicide bombings by Palestinians in Israel, declaring all Hebrew-speaking people regardless of class to be "settlers" and therefore legitimate targets. The Islamic AEL also holds retrograde positions on the questions of



June 1997 demonstration by fascist Vlaams Blok against construction of a mosque in Antwerp. Disperse the fascists with workers action!

women's rights and the oppression of homosexuals. Jahjah declares "our girls are not indoctrinated with feminism" (quoted in *Contrast*, 10 October 2002). While he claims to have been misquoted in his interview with the right-wing journal *Knack* (21 August 2002), it is clear that he believes that women belong in the kitchen.

An AEL demonstration call last June states, "Antwerp is the bulwark of Zionism in Europe." Why Antwerp? Why not Brussels or London? This is in fact designed to pit the 30,000 Arab residents of the city against Antwerp's significant Jewish community. Trapped in this deadly logic of nationalism, the AEL also puts an equal sign between the Jewish diaspora and the Zionist state, thus playing into the hands of the Vlaams Blok fascists. In the same way, Belgian Zionists have, for their own purposes, seized upon some incidents by misguided Arab youth, to fan hysteria over a rise in anti-Semitism in Belgium. (The anti-Semitic Vlaams Blok has even managed to attract some Jewish votes on the basis of their anti-Islamic, anti-Arab agitation.)



Geert Vanden Wijngaert/AP

Belgian undercover cops arrest antiwar demonstrator in Brussels, November 10. Police are key force of bourgeois state, enemies of workers and oppressed.

Reactionary Catholic anti-Semitism simmers below the surface. The anti-fascists of *ResistanceS* note that an allegedly Moslem fundamentalist leaflet from September 2001 calling to "kill the Jews" was in fact the work of neo-Nazis, who also surfaced in February 2002 with the call for a "European intifada." Stickers placed on Jewish store windows in Antwerp saying "Don't buy from Jews" turn out to have come from the American Nazis of the NSDAP-AO and their Belgian helpers. *The Belgian fascists are the deadly enemy of Jew and Arab alike, and must be crushed by mobilizing the united power of the multinational, multi-ethnic Belgian working class.* The AEL sabotages such a united mobilization: Jahjah prefers to debate the Vlaams Blok, as he did under the auspices of a Christian Democratic student group at Ghent on December 17, during which meeting skinheads assaulted protesting leftists.

While fulminating against the "Zionist lobby," Jahjah apparently seriously believed that the Belgian courts would

bring Zionist butcher Ariel Sharon to book for "crimes against humanity." In reality such show trials as that of Serbian ex-president Slobodan Milosevic in The Hague are reserved for those considered to be enemies of the imperialist "New World Order." And the Belgian imperialists hardly have clean hands. Colonial rule by this staunch NATO country in the Congo was particularly gruesome, and it participated in the murder of Congolese nationalist Patrice Lumumba. The AEL's brand of Arab nationalism oscillates between justifying indiscriminate terror, which only plays into the hands of the bloody Zionist rulers of Israel, and appeals to the imperialist powers to intervene.

Nonetheless, despite the AEL's nationalist politics of pressuring the Belgian bourgeoisie, domestically as well as internationally, the repression against the AEL is aimed against all opponents of imperialist war and racist oppression, and against immigrants in general. For this reason the AEL must be defended.

Bringing up the rear are the Belgian pseudo-Trotskyists, in particular the *Vonk* group of Ted Grant's Committee for a Marxist International and the Mouvement pour une Alternative Socialiste/Linkse Socialistische Partij (LSP) affiliated to Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers International. These twin social-democratic offshoots (the former still buried in the SPA, the latter peddling its wares outside) of the British Militant tendency both cover up their basic indifference to racial oppression with hollow rhetoric about the need to unite the working class. Neither raises the elementary demand for full citizenship rights for immigrant workers and their families, for example, and both belittle the fascist danger with the claim that the bourgeoisie "burned its fingers" with Hitler (see our article, "Pseudo-Trotskyist Lullabies," *The Internationalist* No. 14, September-October 2002).

Thus *Vonk*, in a 3 December article lectures the AEL, "There is nothing progressive about withdrawal into one's own culture, the zeal to establish one's own schools, parties or institutions." But *Vonk*'s opposition to nationalism is highly selective. For decades, its British comrades have stubbornly defended the "right" of Protestant reactionaries in Ulster to stage provocations by marching through Catholic neighborhoods! In a similar vein, the Taaffeites' Dutch supporters tailed Pim Fortuyn's racist populist party (the LPF), on the spurious grounds it was addressing real mass concerns about criminality. Yet Fortuyn and the LPF clearly identified immigrants with criminals.

The Taffeite LSP shares the AEL's perspective of cleaning up the bourgeois police. In its statement on the murder in Borgerhout, it warns: "Today, the police are used against immigrants, tomorrow against dockers' strike pickets." Yet in the same paragraph, it preaches: "The task of the police is to avoid riots, not to provoke them." Since when? Later in the article, the LSP complains: "Why don't we have the right to say anything about the police? Democratic control over the police, organized by the population (immigrants, trade unionists, youth, the unemployed) should be normal." This social-democratic reformist claptrap is 100 percent opposed to revolutionary Marxism. The police and army are the chief instruments of state power, and as Marx and Engels noted in their 1872 introduction to the *Communist Manifesto*: "One thing especially was proved by the [Paris] Commune, viz. that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-

made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes."

The situation in Antwerp, in which it is claimed 145 nationalities live and work, cries out for working-class unity. Compared to the situation of blacks in the United States, Arab immigration in Europe is much more recent and fragile, even though these workers have become a key section of the proletariat. Blacks in the U.S. were present from the beginnings of American history – indeed, U.S. capitalism was built on the bedrock of chattel slavery – are more numerous, and have greater social weight.

In contrast to the second-string social democrats and bourgeois nationalists, it is urgently necessary to forge a Trotskyist vanguard party which acts as a tribune of the people and unites the class through championing the cause of immigrants and all the oppressed. It is the working class, not the bourgeois state cleansed of "bad cops" or under illusory "democratic control," that can and must crush the racist terrorists.

NATO War Preparations in Antwerp Harbor

The need to mobilize the working class on an internationalist program is particularly evident in Antwerp, which is the third largest container port in Europe. As such, it is an integral part of the preparations for the imperialist onslaught on Iraq. Antwerp was one of the first ports to participate in the U.S. "Container Security Initiative" after 11 September 2001, which means supervising all transport to the United States using expensive container-scanners and increasing the number of American customs officials. In January it was revealed that 40 U.S. soldiers are being lodged on the outskirts of Antwerp to oversee a convoy of 250 railway cars filled with tanks and other war material, which will be shipped out to the Persian Gulf. Dock workers told supporters of the LFI that there has been heightened U.S. military activity at the harbor for months, at Churchill Dock, Delwaide Dock, the North Sea Terminal and Vrasene Dock.

In mid-November, ten American and four Dutch military officers were present to supervise these activities. Dockers further report that 3,000 American military vehicles (jeeps and trucks) have been loaded onto ships at the Vrasene Dock. They compare the present situation with Operation Sandy Cocktail, the 1991 American transport of war materials through Antwerp harbor to the Persian Gulf. Lt. General Roger Thompson of the U.S. Transportation Command praised this 1991 European logistical support in a speech given at Antwerp: "You supported this massive transportation effort in so many ways... The ports of Northern Europe were filled with military equipment" (quoted in "The Strategic Importance of European Ports in US Military Deployment Against Iraq," by *Vonk* member Misha Van Herck). This time around, "prepositioning" of war materiel will play an even greater role – as seen in the visits to the Dutch port of Eemshaven this fall by the U.S. Military Sealift Command ships *Maj. Stephen Pless* and *Sgt. Matej Kocak*. The League for the Fourth International issued an appeal to dock workers in the Netherlands to refuse to handle war materiel.

The Belgian coalition government – which includes in addition to Verhofstadt's bourgeois liberal VLD, the Flemish-speaking social democrats of the SPA, the French-speaking social democrats of the PSB, and Agalev, the Flemish Greens – has laid down



Flying picket of Belgian dock workers during Antwerp harbor strike, 7 June 2002. Mobilize dockers to stop war material for attack on Iraq, for worker/immigrant defense guards against racist attacks!

a thick smokescreen to camouflage their complicity in Bush's planned Desert Slaughter II. Agalev Chamber of Deputies member Peter van Houtte admits that there are such preparations, but pretends: "Let it be clear that not one single authority has ordered this or given formal permission for it.... The authorities have had no say in this" (Indymedia Belgium 14 November 2002). This is a flat lie. Pointing the finger the other way, Antwerp Harbor Master Baron (!) Leo Delwaide of the bourgeois liberal VLD, even as he denied any "prepositioning" activity, insisted that the permission of Belgium's "core cabinet" (the prime minister and the deputy prime ministers) is necessary for military transport. The Ministry of Defense likewise denied that there was "increased" activity, just as it did at the time of Operation Sandy Cocktail – they pretend that these are routine matters in the framework of NATO.

The government, including Agalev and the SPA, are indeed responsible for the U.S. war transport in Antwerp harbor, although these two parties had signed a declaration stating: "Belgium will in no manner provide support – not even logistical – to the acts of war against Iraq and in the [surrounding] region." This rank hypocrisy is routine for the SPA, which provided NATO with a recent secretary-general, Willy Claes. And now social-democratic "defense" minister Flahaut is pushing sinister plans to put the Belgian army on the streets to guard embassies, NATO offices and military bases.

Even more importantly, the Belgian social democracy is at the forefront of attempts to crush trade-union action on the Antwerp waterfront – precisely the kind of action which could block these war moves by mobilizing the power of the working class and boycotting the transport of war materiel.

Last June 10,000 Belgian dockers went on strike against plans to "liberalize", i.e. privatize, unloading operations, which would lead to a worsening of already unsafe working condi-

tions. Their strike pickets successfully paralyzed all five of the country's ports. The response was not long in coming. In collaboration with the cops, the judiciary and harbor management, the SPA mayor of Antwerp, Leona Detiègne, assembled a list of "vital" roads, which could no longer be blocked. "In the event of a picket line on an access route, the police must identify the participants and negotiate the ending of the blockade. Participants should be aware that they are subject to penal sanctions and fines" (*De Standaard*, 13 September 2002). Indeed, legislation by the European Union could even be used to prosecute such actions as "terrorism."

Many of the war moves in Antwerp harbor have been exposed, either by the pseudo-Trotskyist *Vonk* group or the ultra-Stalinist leftover "Party of Labor" (PvdA/PTB). Yet despite their propaganda campaigns neither group has undertaken a systematic or serious effort calling for *workers action* against the war preparations. In his paper, *Vonk* editorial board member Van Herck gives lip ser-

vice to the idea that it would be good if the trade unions boycotted this transport. But for *Vonk*, this is conditional on the good will of the union tops and SPA leadership, since this group is committed to "deep entry" in the rotting corpse of the Belgian social democracy. *Vonk*'s "actions" – such as the November 18 demonstration near Antwerp's town hall "demanding answers" from municipal authorities (who long ago showed which side they are on) about the transports, or their leafleting of an SPA congress a few days later, which according to their own account was simply ignored by the social-democratic tops – are nothing but pressure tactics on the SPA leadership.

For its part, the PvdA/PTB has issued a number of sharp criticisms of the treacherous role of the SPA and Agalev, provoking the indignation of *Vonk*, which accuses the PvdA/PTB of "trivializing" and narrowing the base of a potential "anti-war" popular front by such criticisms. But despite their "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, these Stalinists are ultimately no less reformist. They demand "weapons inspectors" for the port (whose inspectors, the UN's?) and are committed to a bloc with the bourgeois nationalists of the AEL, functioning as their political lawyers.

In December 2001 dockworkers at Sasebo port in the Nagasaki region refused to load armaments and military supplies onto Japanese navy ships headed to South Asia to assist the imperialist attack on Afghanistan. This shows that such actions are no utopian pipe dream, either in Europe or in the U.S. (where the West Coast dock workers organized in the ILWU have been confronted with an anti-union government assault) or elsewhere. On January 8, Scottish railway engineers refused to move a freight train with ammunition bound for the Persian Gulf, because of their opposition to the war. The potential for militant class struggle is clear, but we need a Trotskyist party built in sharp struggle against class collaboration to galvanize this combativity and give it revolutionary leadership. ■

Mobilize the Power of the Workers Movement, Immigrants and Youth Against the War on Iraq and the Racist Offensive of the Bourgeoisie At Home!

Dock Workers: Boycott U.S. and Dutch Warships and All War Preparations Against Iraq and Afghanistan

**Defend Iraq!
Defeat the Imperialists!**

The following leaflet of the Verbond voor de Vierde Internationale (League for the Fourth International) in the Netherlands was issued last October.

The imperialist war criminals are about to unleash an apocalypse against the Iraqi people. The United States is preparing to launch a "preventive" maritime invasion – using warships like the SS Sgt. Matej Kocak, which has been anchored since last month in the Dutch port of Eemshaven. This aggression will make Iraqi blood flow on the sands, from Baghdad to Basra.

It is extremely urgent to mobilize opposition to this imminent massacre. On October 26 and coming weeks, tens and hundreds of thousands will participate in demonstrations from Amsterdam, Rotterdam and London to Washington. They will hear the preaching of pastors and empty rhetoric of union bureaucrats who will do nothing to endanger the capitalist system which produces economic crises, racism and war. In Amsterdam there will be hypocritical speeches from reformists like Jan Marijnissen of the Socialist Party (SP), and by "doves" like the petty-bourgeois Green-Left politician Paul Rosemuller. This demonstration, organized by the "Platform Against the New War," is aimed at getting the Balkenende cabinet – which sent occupation troops to Kabul – "to take a vigorous stand against any military action against Iraq"! All those who oppose imperialism must reject the calls for UN inspections and sanctions!

The war against Iraq and Afghanistan is simultaneously a war of repression on the home front. It targets workers, immigrants (with or without documents) and all those who, in the United States and around the world, produce the planet's wealth.



U.S. military cargo ship Maj. Stephen Pless in Eemshaven, Netherlands, in October.

Racist raids are regularly carried out in Amsterdam, The Hague, Den Helder and Rotterdam. We say: *Full citizenship rights for immigrants and their families, including the undocumented!*

The anti-immigrant racism of the Dutch state and the hysterical campaigns against immigrants and Muslims in the Netherlands, launched by the List Pim Fortuyn (the election slate of the late demagogue Pim Fortuyn) which is now falling apart, are aimed above all against youth of Moroccan and Caribbean origin. The purpose of these attacks is to declare them the enemy within, to ram through police-state measures, attack democratic rights and give the signal for an even broader offensive against the working class, such as the ban of a strike by maintenance workers at Schiphol Airport last June. KLM management, despite the servile attitude of the labor bureaucrats, is talking about getting rid of the unions as no longer "representative." In the United States, the "war against terrorism" is also directed against the 10,500 West Coast dock workers of the ILWU, whose right to strike is being attacked as against the "national interest."

In the ports and plants in Amsterdam, Eemshaven, Eindhoven and elsewhere, it is urgently necessary to boycott war materiel. The response of the workers movement cannot be restricted to defending remaining social gains: it must be transformed into a counter-offensive of political strikes, labor boycotts and workers' protests in defense of immigrant working people, opposing the racist war on the home front and the imperialist massacre of oppressed peoples in the neo-colonial countries, leading to the expropriation of the ruling class of the bosses of Shell, Phillips and Unilever. Those who labor must rule!

Our international organization, the League for the Fourth International, has from the beginning called on the international working class to defend Iraq, while giving no political support to Saddam Hussein; we fight for the defeat of the imperialists both "at home" and abroad. In the Netherlands and throughout the world, we fight to build a revolutionary workers party based on the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky, to lead the fight to overthrow capitalism through international socialist revolution. ■

For Workers Action Against the Imperialist War!

Mexico: Fox Government A “Hinge” for War on Iraq

The following is translated from a leaflet published by the Grupo Internacionalista/México in November 2002.

No sooner had the members of the United Nations Security Council raised their hands to unanimously approve the resolution proposed by the Untied States which will unleash the war against Iraq than the Mexican government bragged about its new “starring” role on the world stage. President Vicente Fox of the rightist PAN (National Action Party) congratulated his foreign minister Jorge Castañeda, a former “left-wing” academic, and boasted of the “rewards and advantages” of being actively involved in international decision-making as a non-permanent member of the Council (*La Crónica*, 9 November). His representative at the UN, Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, declared that the resolution strengthened “multilateralism” and represented an “honorable page in Mexican foreign policy.” A spokesman for the Secretariat of Foreign Relations said that Mexico “is now playing in the big leagues” (*Milenio*, 8 November). She explained that Mexico had served as the “hinge” joining the polarized positions of the United States and Britain on one side, who sought an “automatic” authorization for the use of force against Iraq, and France and Russia on the other side, who wanted a “two-stage” resolution.

In fact, the “compromise” resolution is nothing but the trigger for the Yankee imperialists’ invasion of the semi-colonial country that U.S. president Bush has chosen as the first target of his “crusade” against the “Axis of Evil.” Although the resolution mentions returning to the Security Council if Saddam Hussein’s government makes the least resistance to the high-handed UN “inspectors,” Washington didn’t commit itself to anything with the body which acts as a sounding board for its imperial policies. In the preceding days, Fox and



J. Scott Applewhite/AP

Fox and Bush at the Pacific Summit, October 26. After the *paso doble* in Los Cabos, Mexico facilitated the approval in the UN Security Council of the motion which will serve as the trigger for the war on Iraq.

Bush staged a spat at the Pacific Summit in Los Cabos, Baja California. The Mexican president (a landowner and former Coca-Cola executive from the state of Guanajuato) is supposed to have privately told his “friend” (the landowner and former Texas oil man) that Mexico would not support the U.S. motion in the United Nations. White House advisors complained that Mexico was supposed to be an “easy vote.” But after this *paso doble* dance, the pretense of “independence” quickly vanished, and in the august Security Council Mexico showed the obligatory servility toward its imperialist master.

If British prime minister Tony Blair has earned the justified reputation of being “Bush’s poodle,” Fox is without doubt the lap dog of His Highness George II, and Castañeda is his official bootlicker. While the drumbeats of war sound around the world and Bush rants that “anyone who is not with us is against us,” the Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, calls to fight to *defeat imperialism and defend Iraq*. Pacifist petitions will not stop the coming bloodbath. It is necessary to combat imperialist war with class war in order to sweep away the capitalist system. Our proletarian and internationalist struggle is directed not only against the U.S. empire but also against its European allies and rivals, and its semi-colonial peons like Fox & Co.

The reaction of the bourgeois opposition and reformist left to the Mexican government’s policy on Iraq has been very different. In a commentary published in *Reforma* (11 November), political scientist Denise Dresser, who is close to the PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, summed it up: “The left applauds, the right grumbles; the left celebrates, the right criticizes. Some congratulate Fox for opposing the United States, while others criticize him for having done so.” The Cardenista academic not only wants to have us believe that Fox opposed the U.S. line, she even takes the president’s

line as her own: "Mexico's new foreign policy is not seeking to permanently line up with the United States or to constantly dispute it; it seeks neither unconditional surrender nor a visceral confrontation. What Mexico wants is to be neighbors without adjectives." In order to give its *imprimatur*, this article was placed on the PRD's site on the Internet.

This corresponds to the official policy of the bourgeois nationalist opposition. Far from somehow opposing imperialism, as some groups of the pseudo-Marxist left pretend, the PRD is seeking at most to bargain with the superpower of the north. A note by the PRD Parliamentary Group dated March 23 declares that an "increasingly close" association with the United States is "inevitable," but it longs for a return to the traditional foreign policy of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which ruled Mexico for seven decades. Under this policy, which took a position "in between the paradigms of cooperation and confrontation, it was always able to obtain certain advantages, both political and economic, which allowed the country to reach certain levels of development and independence." The PRD blames Fox for "having abandoned those principles which gave us a real margin of bargaining power, and totally replacing them with the paradigm of cooperation as the only bargaining strategy, [which] has not translated into obtaining any concrete objective or benefit."

Today the PRD and its "leftist" camp followers applaud Fox's policy on Iraq because on this occasion he returned to the usual double-dealing Mexican foreign policy, criticizing the "unilateral" policy of the U.S. while on essential questions bowing to Washington's demands. Thus, in the same meeting of APEC (the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum) where Fox said Mexico would not vote for the U.S. resolution on Iraq, the director of PEMEX (Mexico's state oil company), Raúl Muñoz Leso, declared that "if a new war is unleashed between the United states and Iraq, Mexico will not only be inclined but also able to substantially increase oil production by its platforms" (*Milenio*, 27 October). Just before the Security Council vote, foreign minister Castañeda remarked in an interview with Radio Red that Mexico "is leaving behind any impression of frictions with the United States" (*New York Times*, 5 November). This was to be expected from the diplomat who "was the first Latin American foreign minister to declare his unconditional support for U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan," as James Petras noted in an essay on "Anti-Globalization, Militarism and Bootlicking" (*Rebelión*, 28 March).

Spearhead of the War Against the Cuban Revolution

The traditional PRI policy was summed up in the watchword of "non-intervention," known as the Estrada Doctrine. Proclaimed in 1930 by the first foreign minister of the PRI regime, Genaro Estrada, this doctrine consisted of refusing to



"Gusano" leader Jorge Mas Santos eggs on pro-Yankee "dissidents" when they burst into the Mexican embassy in Havana, after an invitation to provocation by Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda in a speech in Miami, 28 February 2002.

grant diplomatic recognition on the political basis of acceptability to the empire to the north. It was viewed as a reply to the Monroe Doctrine – "America for the (North) Americans" – under which the U.S. granted itself unrestricted dominion over the Latin American republics to the exclusion of the European powers. But while under PRI governments, Mexico maintained "correct" diplomatic relations with Castro's Cuba, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, it also allowed the U.S. government to stage its anti-Castro operations from Mexican soil. In reality, Mexico's Cuban policy (one of whose architects was the foreign minister of President José López Portillo, Jorge Castañeda, father of the current Mexican foreign minister) could not have persisted without the tolerance of Washington. In the same way, the fact that Mexico recognized the FMLN/FDR in El Salvador while the Pentagon was waging a bloody "low-intensity war" against them made it possible to later offer its services to Washington to negotiate the surrender of the leftist guerrillas in 1990. But today the Fox government has "left behind" any pretense of independence, along with the usual symbolic nationalist rhetoric.

Over the last year, Mexico's diplomatic activity has turned it into the spearhead of Washington's war against Cuba. In February there was Fox's trip to the Caribbean island, where the foreign minister organized a gathering in the diplomatic mission with pro-Yankee "dissidents." A few days later, Castañeda announced during the opening of a Mexican cultural center in Miami in the presence of leading *gusanos* ("worms" – Cuban counterrevolutionaries) that "the doors of the Mexican embassy in Havana are open to all." When these words were broadcast by the CIA's radio station, Radio Martí, the result was the *guaguazo* [bus attack], when a busload of anti-Castroites burst into the embassy. In March, Fox made the insulting request of Fidel Castro that he leave the UN meeting in Monterrey in order to avoid "complicating" Fox's relations with Bush ("make your presentation...afterwards we're having a meal...once the event is over...you return...to the island of Cuba...so that you don't make Friday complicated for me").

This became a scandal when Fox and Castañeda crudely lied about the incident and the Cubans published the transcript of the conversation between Fox and Castro. In April, Mexico joined the U.S. in voting against Cuba in the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Finally, in early October, the Mexican ambassador in Havana, PRD supporter Ricardo Pascoe, resigned criticizing the foreign ministry for plotting subversive acts against Cuba.

The sharp turn of Mexico's policy on Cuba produced cries of indignation from sections of the Mexican bourgeoisie. An editorial in *La Jornada* (22 March 2002) declared "The Bankruptcy of a Foreign Policy." The parliamentary fractions of the PRI and PRD in the Mexican Senate refused Fox permission to make a trip to the United States. In April and May there were various demonstrations protesting Castañeda Jr. and his Cuba policy, which were organized by none other than Cárdenas' PRD and that creature put together by Raúl Salinas [brother of the former president, now in jail on charges of money laundering and murder] out of the remnants of Maoist organizations, the Labor Party (PT). These bourgeois parties, which from time to time adopt populist rhetoric, want to spice up their nationalist credentials and divert the uproar over the Fox government's foreign policy into the sterile channel of bourgeois parliamentarism. And in this, as always, the Cárdenas popular front could count on the participation of the reformist left, which spread the illusion that a more "independent" Mexican foreign policy was possible.

The Militant group, for example, spoke of "the favorable results achieved by the policy of non-intervention and free self-determination of the peoples" of the PRI government in the case of the 1962 Cuban "Missile Crisis," when the Tlatelolco Treaty for the supposed denuclearization of Latin America was signed (*Militante*, May 2002). What a disgrace! Contrary to what these supporters of the tendency led by British pseudo-Trotskyist Ted Grant wrote, the responsibility of every revolutionary in 1962 was to *defend the right of Cuba to have nuclear weapons* to protect itself against the threats of the United States. The programmatic conclusion of the *Militante* article was crystallized in the call for the resignation of the government: "Fox and his whole cabinet should resign!" So that they can be replaced by the PRD (and the PRI), who at most adopt nationalist postures over Cuba in order to get a better deal in negotiations with Washington? But what can you expect from these "socialists" who are organized as a *tendency of a bourgeois party*, the PRD?

Another group falsely claiming to be Trotskyist, the Liga de Unidad Socialista (LUS – followers of the late Ernest Mandel), joined the chorus calling on Fox to adopt a "different foreign policy." In an article in its magazine *Umbra* (May 2002), the LUS wrote of the incident with Fidel Castro in Monterrey: "If the Fox government really were independent of Washington, everything related to this scandal would have been more than enough to get the present foreign minister, Jorge Castañeda, tossed out of office." They also speak of the "unconditional lining-up with Washington's dictates" by Fox, who "has surpassed Presidents Salinas and Zedillo in servility and selling out" to the United States. For these pseudo-Trotskyist

imposters who proclaim "The Fatherland In Danger," it's only a matter of personalities, cabinets or parties, and if another bourgeois group would take office it would recover Mexico's independence.

The Grupo Internacionalista, on the other hand, consistent with Leon Trotsky's perspective of permanent revolution, stresses that in this epoch of capitalist decay it is impossible for the bourgeoisie of a semi-colonial country like Mexico to make itself independent of the imperialist yoke. Even if lightly veiled, such as under PRI rule, or utterly naked like today, the foreign policy of a capitalist Mexico will follow the baton of imperialism. Genuine Trotskyists unconditionally defend the Cuban deformed workers state against counterrevolution, while fighting for proletarian political revolution to install a government based on workers councils (soviet democracy) that would sweep away the bureaucratic Castro regime which is undercutting the remaining revolutionary gains in the name of illusory "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. At the same time, we insist on the need to build a revolutionary workers party in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. Only in this way is it possible to free Cuba from the bloodletting imposed on it by the Yankee economic blockade and to free Mexican workers from the brutal exploitation they suffer at the hands of national and imperialist capital.

Mexican Oil and Geopolitics

If today the foreign policy of the PAN president Fox is closer to the "carnal relationship" with the U.S. that Peronist Argentine president Menem proclaimed in the 1990s, this only expresses more frankly the subjugation to the needs of Yankee imperialism that has been a constant of Mexican governments for more than half a century. While the bourgeois nationalist government of General Lázaro Cárdenas [the father of PRD leader Cuauhtémoc] sought to balance between the proletariat and imperialism, constituting what Trotsky called a bonapartist regime *sui generis* (of a unique kind), already by the Second World War, the balance had shifted toward imperialist interests. In its relations with its "neighbor" to the north, the role of the bonapartist and later semi-bonapartist PRI regime was to preserve stability on the U.S.' southern border, while keeping the powerful Mexican working class at bay and supplying the economic needs of the voracious productive apparatus of the leading capitalist power in the world, primarily in terms of delivering cheap labor and crucial energy supplies.

For most of the past century, *oil* was the touchstone of relations between Mexico and the U.S. This is even more so today, when securing a constant flow of crude oil and natural gas from Mexico is vital to the war against Iraq. The oil and gas pipelines which connect the oilfields of Tampico, Chicontepec, Campeche and Reforma to the steel plants of Pittsburgh and auto plants of Detroit are indispensable factors not only for the industrialists and bankers but also for the generals. If there is any interruption, however brief, in shipments of Near Eastern oil, this could produce a sharp upward spike in the price of gasoline and generalized chaos in the U.S. economy. Washington needs Mexico not only as an "easy vote" in the UN, but

Victor R. Caivano/AP



Cantarell oil platform, near Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche. The U.S. will depend on the supply of energy from Mexico in a war on Iraq.

also, and above all, as a reliable source of fuel supplies.

For that reason, *all* sectors of the Mexican bourgeoisie see the coming war as good for business: they want to earn additional billions of dollars by exporting oil at high prices. They also know that the position they take on the war will determine their future relations with the colossus of the north. This explains both the submissiveness of the Fox government to Bush's demands and the absence of opposition by the PRD to Fox's policy over the upcoming attack on Iraq. Another consequence of this is that there have been no protests against the war organized by the left, which is always attentive to the signals it receives from the bourgeois nationalists. The sharp contrast between this silence on Iraq and the storm of protests around the Fox/Castañeda policy toward Cuba is striking. Yet U.S. imperialism's dependence on Mexico for supplies of strategic raw materials also represents an enormous potential for proletarian internationalist opposition which seeks to organize workers action against the war. An oil strike which stops the flow of Maya Crude would strike a strong blow against Washington's war plans. And from the Pentagon to Wall Street, the American imperialists are well aware of this.

Until the 1938 expropriation of the oil companies decreed by President Cárdenas, the clearest expression of the U.S. policy seeking to push back the (thwarted) Mexican Revolution was the arrogant behavior of the U.S. oil companies and Washington's emphatic refusal to accept Article 27 of the Mexican constitution, which declared underground mineral deposits to be the property of the nation. Following nationalization (which was paid off with heavy compensation to former owners), Mexican oil exports to the U.S. practically ceased due to the boycott organized by Standard Oil. Instead, the growing industrialization of the country through "import substitution" development strategy was subsidized by supplies of cheap energy (oil, gas and hydroelectric energy). But with the discovery of new oil reserves in the mid-1970s, all this changed. In the space of seven years, from 1973 to

1980, Mexican oil production increased by 400 percent, going from 525 million to 2.1 billion barrels a day (today it is around 2.6 billion barrels daily), while proven reserves were multiplied ten-fold (George Grayson, *The Politics of Mexican Oil* [1980]).

This took place just as U.S. was hit by the "oil shock" caused by the boycott of the Arab producers of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) due to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, the interruption of Iranian exports following the fall of the Shah in 1979, and the effects of the Iran-Iraq war which began in 1980. The benchmark price for crude oil went from less than 6 dollars to over 30 dollars a barrel. In this situation, the presence of enormous oil reserves in a neighboring country (Mexico), which moreover was not a member of OPEC, constituted a military factor of the first order for the war planners in the Pentagon. U.S. secretary of war Harold Brown told a con-

clave of business leaders that "the more than \$100 billion dollars which the United States spends on its defense won't mean much if the country to be defended runs out of gasoline" (quoted in John Saxe-Fernández, *Petróleo y estrategia: México y Estados Unidos en el contexto de la política global* [1980]).

As researcher Francisco Colmenares wrote in his book *Petróleo y la lucha de clases en México, 1864-1962* (1982):

"Under these circumstances, the concern and feverish research in the United States trying to quantify the Mexican oil fields is no accident; it has rekindled their interest in returning to playing a determining role in Mexican oil production. Nor is it surprising that in official and military circles, this production is considered to be a strategic reserve."

Colmenares quotes a memorandum from U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, from August 1978, on "Revising U.S. Policy Toward Mexico." Brzezinski wrote that President Jimmy Carter ordered the preparation of a document according to the following guidelines:

1. Calculations of the level of reserves, production goals and outlook, and domestic consumption levels and exportable surpluses.
2. Fiscal and economic importance of prospective income from oil and natural gas for Mexico.
3. Potential impact on U.S. markets of Mexican exports of natural gas and oil, in terms of price and supplies.
4. Potential persuasion points for the U.S. to influence PEMEX to increase its production capacity....
8. Political pressure on Mexico in its energy cooperation with the United States."

Around the same time, a 1976 Pentagon report to the U.S. Senate about "Energy Geopolitics, 1976-2000" expressed the concern that there could be resistance in Mexico to intensifying energy relations with the United States and recommended "special treatment" to overcome hesitation. A U.S. oil and gas expert pointed to the threat for the United States of a war in the Near East, and that in this case:

"Increased imports of crude oil and natural gas from Mexico's Reforma and Campeche fields would permit a political, economic and geographical diversification that would, in part, alleviate these threats and enhance the energy security of the United States."

At the beginning of 1979, President Carter publicly recognized the importance of Mexican energy supplies in case of war. At the end of 1980, a Rand Corporation study, "Mexican Oil and U.S. Policy: Implications for the 1980s," recommended "the establishment of an Energy Common Market" with Mexico and Canada (quotes from Manuel Millor, *Mexico's Oil: Catalyst for a New Relationship with the U.S.* [1982]). Based on this, the Republican government of Ronald Reagan began the campaign in favor of increased integration of the Mexican economy into the U.S. economy, culminating in the Free Trade Agreement under Democrat Bill Clinton.

The U.S.' determination to take over Mexico's hydrocarbon reserves continues to this day. It will be recalled that due to the financial crisis which exploded in December 1994, the Clinton government organized a "rescue package" of some US\$40 billion; in order to pay this back, the income from the sale of Mexican oil was deposited in the coffers of the New York Federal Reserve Bank and never returned to Mexico, not even electronically. Today what for Jimmy Carter was a worry about the future has become a present-day strategic issue for the Bush government, which is seeking to assure oil supplies for its war. This explains the uncommon intervention of the United States government when the State Department spokesman pledged U.S. support to "attempts to uproot corruption in Mexico," and the worries in the New York financial press about the possibility of a Mexican oil workers' strike.

For Workers Action to Defeat the War on Iraq!

Thus not only at the level of UN diplomacy but also at the basic economic level, Mexico fulfills the role of a "hinge" for the U.S. attack on Iraq. The Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, calls for waging "Class war against the imperialist war!" Along with our comrades of the Internationalist Group in the United States, we stress that the warmongers will not be stopped with a few pacifist marches, but instead what's needed is the action of an even more powerful force than the Pentagon war machine. We take inspiration from the actions of the French port workers under Communist leadership during the 1920s who refused to move military

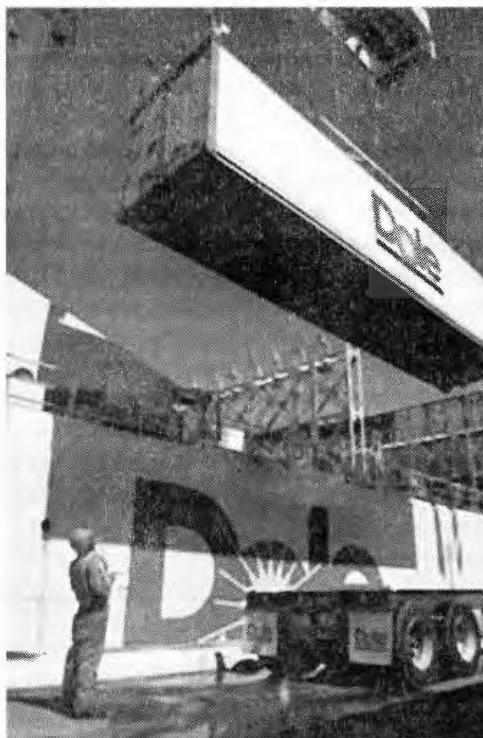
shipments for the colonial war against Berber independence fighters in Morocco. Today, Mexican oil workers have in their hands an enormous potential to hinder the war. Moreover, they were shafted by the contract deal negotiated by the leaders of the corporatist "union", the STPRM, which gave them a paltry wage "increase" of 5 percent, which will be entirely eaten up by inflation.

Another sector of the Mexican working class which will have a direct impact on the war drive is that of the *maquiladoras*, which produce key parts for the American auto industry. During the 1991 Gulf War, the maquiladoras were working at full steam; as soon as the war was over, thousands of workers were fired. Currently, a refusal to work overtime could enormously screw up war preparations. This would also go against anti-communist nationalist elements who have been spreading protectionist propaganda complaining about the "disloyal competition" of the Chinese deformed workers state, which supposedly endangers Mexican maquiladoras due to the miserable wages paid to Chinese workers by capitalists in the Special Economic Zones producing for export markets. In this way these Mexican nationalists imitate reactionary elements of the U.S. labor movement who denounce the "export of American jobs" to China and Mexico.

At the same time, Mexican dock workers could be in a decisive position if a strike breaks out on the West Coast by U.S. longshoremen, who were forced back to work under judicial order. In that case, we call on them not to handle any cargo from or to the United States – let it

rot on the Mexican docks! Such acts of international workers solidarity would have international repercussions. But in order to carry them out, it is indispensable to wage a fight to forge a class-struggle union leadership against the corporatist *charros* (government-imposed bureaucrats) of the CT/CTM/CROC/CROM, and the pro-PRD "democratic" union bureaucrats who despite their nationalist rhetoric have done nothing concretely against the Free Trade Agreement and ultimately offered their services to the Fox government as strikebreaking scabs in the case of an oil strike.

The war on Iraq is currently the focal point of the class struggle on a world scale. In order to defeat it and defend the Iraqi people, what's needed is a bitter struggle of the workers of the world, including Mexican workers. This means sharply breaking with the nationalist outlook which binds them to "their own" bourgeoisie, which is a fellow participant in the war, and *breaking the chain of imperialist domination at the weakest "hinge," to fight for international socialist revolution!* ■



David Maung/AP

Banana boat diverted to the port of Ensenada, Baja California, being unloaded during the West Coast longshore lockout in early October. The Grupo Internacionalista calls on Mexican port workers not to handle cargos to or from the U.S. during a struggle of the U.S. longshoremen.

Strike to Smash Taft-Hartley Anti-Labor War Repression!

For Powerful Workers Action

Against the Bosses' War!

The following leaflet was distributed at the National Labor Conference Against Taft-Hartley, held in San Francisco on December 7, and the subsequent Coast Caucus of the ILWU.

The U.S. imperialist war on Iraq is also a capitalist war on the working class, blacks, Latinos and immigrants in the United States. While the Pentagon prepares to nuke civilian bomb shelters in Baghdad, American employers and their government are going after the unions, oppressed minorities and democratic rights with a vengeance. This is *class war*, and as the Harlan County miners declared in the bloody coalfield wars of the 1930s, *there are no neutrals here*.

But it's "one-sided class war," and it's been that way for a long time. The warmongers won't be stopped by UN debates, jawboning in Congress, peace parades around the White House, or two, three, many antiwar resolutions by labor bureaucrats. The bosses' war must be *defeated* – in Iraq and on the home front – by mobilizing the power of the working class, in the streets, on the docks and in the plants.

A National Labor Conference Against Taft-Hartley and Union-Busting has been called in San Francisco for December 7, by International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, the ILWU International, San Francisco, Alameda and South Bay Labor Councils, and various Bay Area unions. Fighting the "slave labor law" used against West Coast longshore workers locked out by the Pacific Maritime Association bosses last September should be the cause of all labor. But *how* exactly should Taft-Hartley be fought? Here there is a sharp counterposition between those who pine for the "good old days" of class collaboration and those who stand for uncompromising class struggle.

At the October 5 labor solidarity rally in Oakland, "progressive" Bay Area labor leaders like SF labor council head Walter Johnson vowed to shut down San Francisco for a few hours if Taft-Hartley was used against longshore workers. Another top union official said labor should close the Golden Gate and Bay Bridges. Demonstrators

chanted, "Shut it down! Shut it down!" Back in August, the SF Labor Council issued a resolution against a war on Iraq and demanding the government stay off the docks. But this was just hot air. Taft-Hartley was imposed and nothing happened, not even symbolic actions. In many ways it was a replay of how the AFL-CIO tops bowed to Reagan's busting of the PATCO air controllers' strike in 1981, paving the way for wholesale union-busting around the country. The stakes today are no less.

The program of class struggle requires a class-struggle leadership to wield it, and that leadership must be forged in combat against the pro-capitalist bureaucracy. The present misleaders of labor, including the sponsors of this conference, have chained the workers and oppressed to the class enemy, in the form of the Democratic Party. Republican George Bush slapped a Taft-Hartley injunction on the ILWU, but Democrat Dianne Feinstein demanded he do so. And the ILWU and Bay Area labor council tops all backed Feinstein for senator, even if some did so claiming she was a "lesser evil." Lesser-evilism is a program for defeat.

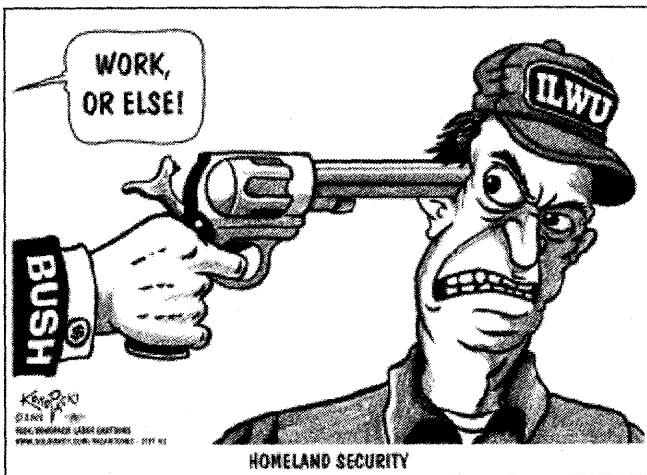
The characteristic Bay Area "popular front" stretches from Feinstein through the union bureaucracy to various left-wing groups. Feinstein (who flew the Confederate flag at SF city hall when she was mayor) was a little hard for many leftists to swallow, so instead they championed black Democrat Barbara Lee. The Workers World Party (WWP), Communist Party (CP) and even the erstwhile Trotskyists of the Spartacist League (SL) all hailed Lee for refusing to vote for Bush's war powers resolution last year. For weeks on end, they all kept silent about the fact that Lee voted for the \$40 billion war budget. (This past fall, Lee said talk of Taft-Hartley was "premature" – that is, Bush used it too early.)

The Iraq war cannot be separated from the assault against longshore workers, although many desperately try to do so. During the PMA lockout, none of the ISO/WWP/CP reformists, not even the left-centrists of the SL, called on the ILWU to "hot-cargo" war materiel,



Internationalist photo

ILWU dock workers and supporters at October 5 solidarity rally. The organized workers movement should have mobilized its power to defy the Taft-Hartley "slave labor law."



as the Internationalist Group did. Everyone at the conference will declare their opposition to Taft-Hartley union-busting; many will recall how in 1978 the coal miners ripped up Jimmy Carter's Taft-Hartley injunctions. But the reformists and centrists did not call for dock workers to *defy Taft-Hartley and refuse to work under slave labor conditions*. No doubt there will be a lot of criticism at the conference of the sellout contract negotiated by the ILWU leadership under Jim Spinosa, which the Coast Caucus is set to vote on Monday, December 9. But the opportunists have avoided the "s-word" (strike) like the plague. We say today, as *The Internationalist* has said since last summer, that it is necessary to *organize a coastwise strike to defeat the union-busting offensive*.

So what about the ILWU contract? Bush says it's a good deal, PMA boss Miniace praises it, Spinosa hails it, but many longshore and warehouse workers aren't buying it. The terms are still being kept secret from the membership, but any class-conscious union militant knows that a "settlement" announced by the White House is bad news for the workers. From the information that has leaked out so far, it's clear that the ILWU leaders sacrificed thousands of future union jobs in the name of "modernization." This recalls the "modernization and mechanization" (M&M) contracts negotiated by ILWU founder Harry Bridges in the 1960s which drastically cut the union ranks. The *union hiring hall*, a key gain of the 1934 strike, is threatened by the growth of "steady men" jobs. And a sweetheart deal has reportedly been negotiated for higher wages in Spinosa's home port of Los Angeles-San Pedro. ILWU workers should vote the sellout down and shut down the coast tighter than a drum.

Many "progressives" argue the war is a "union issue." ILWU Local 10 had speakers at both the Washington and San Francisco antiwar protests on October 26. But the war is more than another "issue," and labor is more than another "constituency" to be appealed to. *The workers movement has the power to cripple Washington's drive for war on Iraq*, and U.S. rulers are acutely aware of this. The Bush Administration demanded the injunction against the West Coast port shutdown saying that a work stoppage "may degrade military readiness" and hinder the U.S.' "ability to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism." War secretary Rumsfeld argued that a port stop-

page "disrupts the flow of essential military cargo...during this time of war." A solid West Coast dock strike would be a powerful blow against warmongers who are hell-bent on staging a new "Desert Slaughter" in the Persian Gulf.

This is the kind of sharp class struggle against imperialist war that Lenin and Trotsky stood for. Following the 1919 Seattle general strike, dock workers there and in San Francisco refused to load shipments of guns being sent to the White (counterrevolutionary) armies besieging Red Russia. In 1920, British dock workers refused to load war materiel bound for the imperialist siege of the Soviet republic. Today, supporters of the League for the Fourth International in Europe have appealed to dockers in the Netherlands and Belgium to refuse to handle war cargo or to load and unload U.S. Military Sealift Command ships. The policy of the ILWU leadership is the opposite: during the lockout they got the PMA to let longshoremen load war materiel; a Local 10 press release declared, "The ILWU is committed to shipping all military cargo." Left groups that dodge the question of war cargo (the ISO even pretended the stoppage this fall didn't affect military shipments) are bowing to the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy and the Pentagon.

Yet there is no ducking the Iraq war in this battle: the government already had talks with the PMA about putting docks under military control in a strike, and there will be sure to be attempts to organize star-spangled scabbing. Jingoistic flag-waving is bowing to the enemy and will only weaken dock workers' resolve in this hard class battle against wartime anti-labor repression, while "fair trade" protectionism sets U.S. workers against their class brothers and sisters around the world. Each year the ILWU commemorates the workers killed in the 1934 San Francisco port strike. But this is not just ancient history. A dock strike under present wartime conditions would be a bitter battle on the order of the '34 Frisco strike. Such a showdown requires serious preparations by a class-conscious union leadership.

Some ILWU members fear that if they don't agree to a concessionary contract, the government will put longshore under the Railway Labor Act and take away even more union gains. But the recent United Air Lines debacle shows the futility of trying to buy security by piecing off the bosses. The *Wall Street Journal* wrote that the settlement agreed to by the PMA and the ILWU tops was a victory for government union-busting, headlining "Taft-Hartley, Victorious." Longshore workers have the power to make this voice for the bankers and speculators eat its words. There is a lot of anger across the country against the corporate criminals who bilked Enron workers of their pensions while shamelessly looting the company. If a fighting union had the determination and program to stand up to the exploiters and war criminals who run this country, it would send shock waves across the U.S.

The fight to defend the ILWU must take on anti-union strikebreaking measures like New York's Taylor Law, now being held as a sword over the head of the Transport Workers Union in NYC. It must be a fight for the rights of blacks and immigrants. Importantly, in 1999 the ILWU stopped work up and down the coast for ten hours to demand freedom for former



Fight to organize the unorganized, including non-unionized immigrant truckers (above), and for full union rights to “B-men” and casuals, is key to defending ILWU hiring hall and defeating union-busting offensive.

Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal on Pennsylvania's death row. Many longshore workers are denied full union rights as “B-men” and casuals, while immigrant truckers are the targets of the bureaucrats' chauvinism. It must be a fight to organize the unorganized, particularly in the racist “open shop” South, as the K-T Clay miners in South Carolina have been courageously waging. Above all, it must be an international fight, and not just with empty solidarity motions. Dock workers' unions from

stranglehold will not be broken by passing a few resolutions, forming one more “coalition” or launching another campaign. What is required is a real fight for a victorious class war of the workers and oppressed against imperialist war, union-busting and racist repression. Only a leadership fighting to build revolutionary workers parties internationally, in the struggle to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, can lead the working class in the kind of head-on class struggle so urgently required today. ■

ILWU Local 10 Motion Against Taft-Hartley

In a significant reflection of longshore workers' anger at Taft-Hartley and widespread opposition to war on Iraq, on November 23 a membership meeting of ILWU Local 10 in the San Francisco Bay Area passed a motion (printed below) against the slave labor law. The motion was sent to the ILWU Coast Caucus, where the bureaucrats buried it – predictably, in particular because a solid dock shutdown would require stopping the flow of materiel for the imperialist war. A real fight on these issues means following the example of British train drivers who on January 8 refused to move a munitions train bound for a NATO base (see article on page 6).

DUMP TAFT-HARTLEY

WHEREAS, from the outset the employers in the Pacific Maritime Association have sought to provoke government intervention in hopes of breaking our union; and

WHEREAS, their lockout provocation has succeeded in getting President Bush to impose the Taft-Hartley slave labor act; and

WHEREAS, Washington wants the ports open not only to guarantee the flow of megaprofits to CEOs who rake in billions but also so that they can rain death and destruction on the Iraqi people while sending soldiers to the Persian Gulf for the profits of Enron and Exxon; and

WHEREAS, slavery, which held generations of African Americans, was abolished in this country through the Civil War; and WHEREAS wide sections of the labor movement have expressed at Taft-Hartley being used against our union; and WHEREAS, the coal miners defied Taft-Hartley in 1978; and WHEREAS, being forced to work is a threat to the health and safety of longshore/warehouse workers and all workers, and the imposition of Taft-Hartley is an attack on the democratic rights of all;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union have determined that slave labor will not be tolerated on West Coast docks, which are [sic] hereby refuse to work under such inhumane and deplorable conditions.

Continuing the proud tradition of those who fought for freedom from the slave masters, this union calls on working people, minorities and defenders of democratic rights to mobilize to repudiate the government-employer union-busting attack.

The membership instructs the officers of the local to forward this resolution to the Caucus in order to undertake united action in defense of our union in all ports.

Source: LabourNet UK

around the world represented at the conference have seen their unions ripped apart, despite many gestures of good will and resolutions of solidarity.

What's needed is class-struggle *action*. Events in the last few weeks underline the possibility of an international working-class offensive. In South Africa, the recent two-day general strike was the third in three years; in Italy, a million and a half demonstrated against the Iraq war, including many unions, while Fiat workers mobilize in defense of their jobs; in Britain, firefighters strike in defiance of “Bush's poodle” Tony Blair, who complains that military forces are being diverted from war preparations. In France, public sector workers take to the streets against the government's privatization plans.

But all of these struggles remain isolated, nationally and even within each country, because of the traditional workers leaders who are beholden to “their own” bourgeoisie. This

IG at Bay Area Labor Conference:

Strike Against Taft-Hartley! Hot-Cargo War Materiel!

Internationalist Group supporters intervened with a program for sharp class struggle at a "National Labor Conference Against Taft-Hartley and Union-Busting" held December 7 in San Francisco. The event was called in response to President Bush's use of the slave-labor law to order 10,500 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union back to work in October, after they had been locked out by the employers' Pacific Maritime Association.

The conference was held immediately before the week-long Coast Caucus of the ILWU, which on December 12 voted in favor of the contract proposal promoted by the ILWU leadership and the PMA – and openly pushed by the Bush government. This contract would mean the loss of 400-600 jobs in the short term as well as undercutting the union hiring hall won in the historic 1934 SF maritime strike. (The contract will now be sent to the union membership for approval or rejection.)

Called under the auspices of the ILWU, the AFL-CIO labor councils of the Bay Area, several local unions and various "solidarity" groups, the December 7 conference was attended by some 200 unionists. Many came hoping for a real strategy for labor action against Taft-Hartley and the U.S. rulers' drive for war on Iraq. Representatives of the Liverpool dockers brought news of the British fire fighters' strike and denounced "Labour" Party prime minister Tony Blair's strikebreaking and plans to send troops to Iraq. Myron Renew, union organizer of the Kentucky-Tennessee Clay miners in Langley, South Carolina, addressed the conference on the fight to unionize the South in the aftermath of the successful defense of the Charleston Five longshoremen. A spokesman for the Tate Lyle workers in the Decatur, Illinois "war zone" eloquently warned against illusions in the "labor hacks" of the AFL-CIO leadership who stabbed their struggle in the back.

Yet overall the conference was a talk shop for union bureaucrats who wanted to blow off steam but opposed any real mobilization of the power of labor against Taft-Hartley and imperialist war. This was made clear in the opening session when ILWU press spokesman Steve Stallone said that while the PMA told the public the lockout was the union's fault, "the ILWU made news and scored a lot of PR points by continuing to do a certain amount of the work," including shipping "critical cargo" to Alaska and Hawaii and "continu[ing] to work the military cargo so that the government couldn't get on our case about that." In fact, workers picketed the docks during the lockout, and a union leadership worth its salt would have seen to it that nothing moved and that the docks were shut down tight.

In the perfunctory plenary discussion at the end of the conference, an Internationalist Group speaker (the only person to

speak from the audience in opposition to the bureaucrats), said that "a love-in where everyone says a lot of hot air about solidarity" would accomplish nothing. What's needed, he said, is to organize class-struggle action like "ripping up this contract promoted by Bush and the Pentagon, striking against Taft-Hartley, backed by a mobilization of all labor, and hot-cargoing war goods instead of boasting about loading them like Steve Stallone did in the opening session" – whereupon this spokesman for the ILWU International burst into enraged heckling. (Earlier, Stallone stormed off the stage when the Tate Lyle worker criticized the sellout ILWU contract proposal.)

Our speaker was met with loud applause from part of the audience, booing from others, and an "answer" from ILWU Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Clarence Thomas, who said hot-cargoing war goods is not possible because "we live in the real world." At an earlier workshop on "Labor and the War," Thomas spoke at length against the IG's call, saying "the reality of the situation is that we have to do it," i.e., load war materiel. This is the same kind of logic as the ILWU International's bowing down to Taft-Hartley with only pro forma verbal protest.

Thomas was echoed by a spokeswoman for the International Socialist Organization, who after lauding Thomas for speaking "passionately and eloquently" said, "I don't think it's a question right now of stopping the military cargo." At another workshop, the ISO responded to an IG comrade's call for strike action and hot-cargoing by saying, "You have to learn to walk before you can run." While presenting this patronizing view of the organized working class as toddlers, social democrats like the ISO sure know how to crawl before the bourgeoisie.

We print below the intervention by an IG comrade at the "Labor and the War" workshop:

My name is Abram, from the Internationalist Group. The war against the working class and minorities is part of this imperialist war which the American ruling class is unleashing against Iraq. Our organization raises the call for the defeat of U.S. imperialism and the defense of Iraq.

Now, coalitions and resolutions, conferences and peace marches are not going to defeat the war. But I will tell you something which could take a real step towards defeating this imperialist war, and that is for the longshore workers to refuse to handle war materiel. During the lockout, the ILWU bureaucracy of [union president] Jim Spinosa et al. not only shipped the war materiel but boasted about it. Today, a representative for them repeated this, and the union leadership has promised to continue to do so, in other words to show the American



Port workers in Santos, Brazil fought bitter battle in April 2001 to defend union hiring hall, a gain which had been won in 1934 (as in the U.S.). Military Police viciously attacked striking dockers, as in the worst days of the military regime (1964-1985), leaving 50 injured and 28 arrested.

(Photos: TV Mar)



class that has the power to do it, not just here but internationally. In Holland, for example, and other parts of Europe, supporters of our international organization, the League for the Fourth International, have called on dock workers to hot-cargo, or as they call it in some parts of Europe to "black" the cargo of U.S. warships, for example in the Dutch harbors.

In Brazil, our organization spoke to port workers in the port of Santos and in Rio de Janeiro. In Santos the workers are very familiar with what the destruction of the union hiring hall means: the union hiring hall was taken away by the bosses and there was a big protest against that by the workers, which was put down by the Military Police.

Just so you know, there is actually a current from Brazil represented here, O Trabalho [followers of French pseudo-Trotskyist Pierre Lambert in the Workers Party], which the plenary speaker from the Brazilian CUT labor federation belongs to, that actually "unionizes" Military Police, the most violent enemies of black people and the working class in Brazil.

In Santos there was a lot of sentiment in favor of a work stoppage in solidarity with the longshore workers in the United States, but the word came down from the entourage of Lula, the guy who was just elected president of Brazil, and from the union bureaucracy of the CUT, that to take this elementary act of solidarity with the U.S. longshore workers would endanger the election prospects of Lula and his right-wing vice-presidential candidate.

One final point: the Democratic Party is represented in the antiwar coalitions as the instrumentality for keeping the working-class power chained, and even the most obvious things,

like to strike against Taft-Hartley, to rip up this contract – which is a contract that comes from the White House and the Pentagon – even these things are being suppressed by the "alliance" with the Democratic Party.

In New York City the transit workers are on the receiving end of a New York State parallel to Taft-Hartley, which is the Taylor Law [prohibiting strikes by public employees], and are on the receiving end of the war against the working class. We call for uniting a strike by the transit workers in New York with a strike by the ILWU.

Protest Firing of K-T Clay Workers' Leader

In an intensification of the anti-labor vendetta waged in South Carolina by the Kentucky-Tennessee Clay Company, in early November 2002 the company fired union organizer Myron Renew, president of Boilermakers Local D-598. (For background, see articles in *The Internationalist* Nos. 12 [Fall 2001], and 14 [September-October 2002]. Brother Renew's powerful description of the struggle to organize the South, which he linked to the fight against racism and to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, was received with a standing ovation by unionists at the December 7 SF conference. But what is required is solid labor action internationally in defense of the courageous workers at K-T Clay, a subsidiary of the Imerys conglomerate, which has operations around the world.

Send statements protesting the union-busting campaign and the firing of Brother Renew to: Myron K. Renew, President Local D-598, 258 Sand Rockway, Trenton, SC 29847

SL: Hard to Starboard

The Spartacist League, which has its second-largest local in the San Francisco Bay Area, did not intervene in the December 7 SF labor conference. Was this abstention some kind of “ultraleft sectarianism”? Far from it. In fact, the SL’s line on the longshore conflict is a telling example of its rapid motion to the right.

As we noted in the Internationalist Group statement “Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!” (October 17), on the longshore workers’ picket lines during the lockout, the Spartacist League “failed to mention the issue of war materiel, much less call to boycott it.... Nor did the front-page article in *Workers Vanguard* (4 October) utter a word of criticism of union leader Jim Spinosa, who tried to introduce flag-waving ‘anti-terrorist’ slogans...; nor, for that matter, did it call on dock workers to defy the Taft-Hartley injunction which was clearly in the works, or urge that the rest of the working class undertake strike action against the slave labor law.” The subsequent longshore article in *WV* (18 October) continued to quote Spinosa favorably without criticism, and did not call to defy Taft-Hartley or to refuse to handle war cargo.

This silence is all the more striking because only a month beforehand, the Spartacist League had highlighted the issue of war materiel, criticizing the ILWU tops for “cynical empty words” about the war on Iraq, because they “have sworn in advance that they will continue to load military shipments in the event of a strike” (*WV*, 6 September). Talk about cynical empty words – when the showdown actually came, the SL dropped this subject like a hot potato.

For that matter, nowhere have they called for U.S. workers to strike against the Iraq war – they already dropped that call in polemicizing against the Internationalist Group back in 1998 (see “SL Rejects Calls for Labor Strikes Against Imperialist War Moves,” *The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998).

One year ago, *Workers Vanguard* (7 December 2001) headlined “Japanese Longshoremen Refuse to Load Warships,” reporting the courageous action of workers at the Sasebo port in Nagasaki Prefecture who “have been refusing to load armaments and military supplies onto Japanese navy ships headed to assist the U.S.-led war of terror on Afghanistan.” Currently, the SL is trying to justify its refusal to call for the defeat of its “own” imperialist bourgeoisie in the war on Iraq by chanting “class struggle at home.” What this nationally centered slogan translates into in practice was shown in the West Coast longshore lockout, where the SL pointedly dropped any call on U.S. workers to carry out the kind of internationalist action undertaken by Japanese dockers.

This was no oversight. Challenged as to why they have not called for hot-cargoing war supplies or for strike action against Taft-Hartley, SLers mouth the same verbiage used by ILWU bureaucrats at the SF conference. At a December 14 antiwar march in New York, for example, SLers justified not calling for hot-cargoing war materiel due to “tactical considerations,” because “the union has to keep its head above water,” and the classic, all-purpose excuse for opportunism, “you have to approach people where they’re at”! At a rally in support of NYC transit workers

two days later, in a discussion between several SLers and IG supporters, the SL’s main spokesman on trade-union issues justified not calling for defiance of Taft-Hartley, and even criticized the Internationalist Group for calling for opposition to the sellout deal negotiated by the ILWU tops, saying “no one’s seen it.”

In contrast to this demoralized outlook, the Internationalist Group pointed out in leaflets distributed on the ILWU picket lines that “standing together as a class, the workers have the power to defeat the bosses’ drive.” We noted, “Some of Bush’s advisors fear that if he imposes Taft-Hartley it could backfire and ‘energize’ the labor movement. This fear could be turned into reality – *if labor mobilizes now and meets government intervention with strike action by strategic sectors of organized labor.*” And as we pointed out in *The Internationalist* No. 14 (September-October 2002), “Bowing to slave-labor decrees only paves the way for even more savage union-busting, as shown by the bitter experience of what happened after 1981 when the labor tops sat by as Reagan smashed the PATCO air traffic controllers.”

Back in 1971, when a national longshore walkout was ended when President Richard Nixon issued a Taft-Hartley injunction, *WV* denounced ILWU leader Harry Bridges for “whip[ping] the men back to work under the excuse of the Taft-Hartley injunction” and urged “defiance of Taft-Hartley.” A five-point program for longshore prominently highlighted the demands: “For labor strikes against the war: Halt the flow of all war goods” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 3, November 1971). That was then, this is now, we can already hear the SL say.

We’ve pointed out how in recent years the Spartacist League has progressively abandoned one central Trotskyist programmatic position after another. This has occurred piece-meal, but what is most notable is that these capitulations occur every time the SL faces a test by the class struggle. The war repression of the ILWU workers is the latest.

Postscript: At a January 10 New York demonstration, leading SL spokesperson Alison Spencer put the official imprimatur on this latest rightist capitulation. She first claimed to an Internationalist Group member, “It’s hard to hot-cargo things when you’re locked out.” Our comrade replied that the ILWU leadership publicly boasted of getting an agreement with the PMA bosses to ship war materiel during the lockout. Spencer then tried another tack, saying of stopping war materiel: “It wasn’t the main issue.” ILWU president Jim Spinosa couldn’t have said it better.

For the SL, Every Day is Sunday

In 1998, the SL denounced the Internationalist Group for allegedly “phony agitation for trade-union actions – like the boycott of military shipments,” because it didn’t have “resonance” among the workers. To this they counterposed the call for socialist revolution. We responded: “Lenin and Trotsky noted that for the pre-World War I Second International, socialist revolution (its ‘maximum program’) had been reduced to a subject for empty ‘Sunday speechifying.’ For the SL/ICL today, on the road to ‘maximalist’ social democracy, every day is Sunday” (*The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998).

Letter to the ICL

The letter to the International Communist League (ICL – the Spartacist tendency) which we publish below was written by a North African comrade, a former militant of the Trotskyist Platform Tendency (TPT), a minority opposition in the Algerian Parti Socialiste des Travailleurs (PST – Socialist Workers Party), a sympathizing section of the United Secretariat (USec), then led by the late Ernest Mandel.

The Russian Question

I was recruited to the TPT in 1992, centrally on the Russian question. At the time of the counterrevolution in the USSR, the Algerian PST and its co-thinkers in the USec found themselves on Yeltsin's barricades. Rather than defending the principled Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the degenerated workers state, they wrote in *Inprecor* in 1991 that "it was necessary to oppose the coup [by Gorbachev lieutenants] without hesitation, and on those grounds to fight alongside Yeltsin." This Stalinophobic and anti-Soviet logic led me to break with these pseudo-Trotskyists. I subsequently joined the comrades of the TPT, where I learned that the correct attitude of a Trotskyist party at the time that Bush's flunkey took power should have been: to call on the working class to oppose Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary coup, and to be prepared to make a military bloc with recalcitrant elements of the bureaucracy in an armed struggle against the open restorationists.

A program for the defense of the collectivized economy by a political revolution would have been placed on the agenda; the Trotskyists would have then entered into a united front with the Thermidorian section of the bureaucracy against the open offensive of capitalist counterrevolution. As Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program, "all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko). The revolutionary elements within the bureaucracy, only a small minority, reflect, passively it is true, the socialist interests of the proletariat.... If tomorrow the bourgeois-fascist grouping, the 'faction of Butenko,' so to speak, should attempt the conquest of power, the 'faction of Reiss' inevitably would align itself on the opposite side of the barricades. Although it would find itself temporarily the ally of Stalin, it would nevertheless defend not the bonapartist clique but the social base of the USSR...."

What comrade Norden sought to explain in speaking of the possibility of a "Reiss faction" in the DDR (East Germany) and USSR was that, when the ICL was putting forward a revolutionary perspective with a Trotskyist program for political revolution in the DDR and

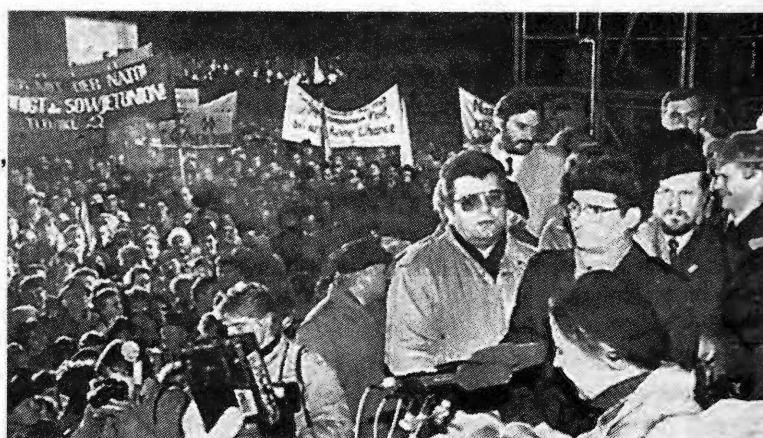
a social revolution in West Germany, one should seek to make a military bloc with recalcitrant elements of the SED (East German Stalinist party) bureaucracy. That does not constitute a negation of the role of the ICL as a revolutionary leadership, but rather is a correct understanding of the Trotskyist analysis of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Joseph Seymour, the retired intellectual of the ICL, categorically denies such a possibility, in *Spartacist* [English edition, No. 55, Autumn 1999]. In other words, if there was massive working-class resistance to a counterrevolution, the bureaucracy would not split into factions, and the Reiss faction was specific to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. He goes on, "It is *not* a trans-historic concept applicable to all Stalinist bureaucracies in all times and places." The case of Hungary demonstrates the falseness of this new line of the ICL. Thus Seymour dismisses any possibility of a bloc with a Thermidorian faction of the bureaucracy, on the pretext that it does not exist. This is a shameless revision and a prelude to revising the Trotskyist analysis of the nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Trotsky explains that the privileges of the bureaucracy came from the planned economy. Contrary to this Marxist analysis, the ICL asserts since 1996 that the Stalinists led the counterrevolution in the DDR. As a Trotskyist, I reject this assertion. The Stalinist bureaucrats didn't lead the counterrevolution; it was the work of the imperialist bourgeoisie with its social-democratic labor lieutenants. The bureaucracy opened the road to counterrevolution with its counterrevolutionary policy of the popular front and its dogma of socialism in one country. If the Stalinist bureaucrats of the PDS lead the counterrevolution in East Germany, why did the ICL title an article in *Le Bolchevik* of 1992 "Free Honecker!"? And if the Kremlin was also behind the counterrevolutionary destruction of the DDR, why did the ICL salute the presence of the Red Army soldiers? It would have been necessary then, according to this new line, to call for the withdrawal of the Red Army from East Germany, as a comrade of the League for the Fourth International pointed out in discussion with militants of the SL/U.S.

In the USSR, Gorbachev's "market socialism" gave Yeltsin encouragement and the opportunity to take power with the aid of

250,000 at Treptow protesting fascist desecration of Soviet Army graves, East Berlin, 3 January 1990. If the Stalinist bureaucracy "led" counterrevolution, what was the ICL doing on the platform with them?



Spartakist

Bolshevism vs. Centrism on the National Question



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Leon Trotsky in Coyoacán, Mexico, 1939.

"What characterizes Bolshevism on the national question is that in its attitude toward oppressed nations, even the most backward, it considers them not only the object but also the subject of politics. Bolshevism does not confine itself to recognizing their 'right' to self-determination and to parliamentary protests against the trampling upon of this right. Bolshevism penetrates into the midst of the oppressed nations; it raises them up against their oppressors; it ties up their struggle with the struggle of the proletariat in capitalist countries; it instructs the oppressed Chinese, Hindus or Arabs in the art of insurrection and it assumes full responsibility for this work in the face of civilized executioners. Here only does Bolshevism begin, that is revolutionary Marxism in action. Everything that does not step over this boundary remains centrism."

—Leon Trotsky, *What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat* (January 1932)

envision a military bloc with such officers in a similar situation (for example, in China) in order to ward off the capitalist offensive? At the time of the counterrevolution in the USSR, the ICL carried out quite a bit of work in that spirit.

With its new line, the ICL presents us with the bureaucracy as a monolithic counterrevolutionary bloc from head to toe, which could only be the case of an independent class. This new line strangely resembles that of all the pseudo-Trotskyists during the Cold War. With this revisionist line, the ICL is certainly preparing to renounce the defense of the other remaining deformed workers states.

Today in China the bureaucracy is paving the way for capitalist counterrevolution in that it capitulates before the multiple imperialist attacks and the pressures of bourgeois restorationist forces. The choice is between proletarian political revolution and capitalist counterrevolution, and to lead this political revolution it is urgently necessary to build a Trotskyist vanguard party. We have to look to the possibility of winning to the Trotskyist program and party a sector from among the recalcitrant elements of the Chinese bureaucracy, even if it is rather small, as Trotsky foresaw, provided that we put forward a program of transitional demands to defend collectivized property.

The finish up on this question, I must say that I myself was disoriented by the one-sided literature of the ICL, and I accepted that Norden was a new Pablo. But from the beginning of my correspondence with you, I had some doubts. Now that I have reread the Trotskyist literature of the LFI, I have noted the fallacious and lying nature of your literature. In this regard, I urge the militants of the ICL to seriously reread all the issues of *The Internationalist*. The Russian question and the Soviet state drew a line of demarcation in the international workers movement. The attitude toward the Soviet Union has been the criterion on which the genuine Trotskyist tendency is separated from all the revisionist capitulators. Today it is the same with the Trotskyist LFI and the centrist capitulators of the ICL.

The Colonial Question

The position of the ICL on Puerto Rico and the colonial question in general has led me to understand more deeply the evolution of the ICL toward social-chauvinism, turning its back on the Leninist policy concerning colonies and imperialist war.

Your "ICL" position on Puerto Rico consists simply in calling for the right of independence, using as the pretext the will of the masses who are not in favor of independence as such. The will of the population is certainly a factor which Marxists must take into account to determine how to get the national question off the agenda. But in the colonies, Trotsky insisted that Leninists must struggle to place the proletariat at the head of the struggle for emancipation from the yoke of imperialism and their bourgeois "national" intermediaries, as a constituent element of the socialist revolution. It seems to me that you consciously confound the national question in a multi-national state and the colonial question. Thus you renounce a key aspect of the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution.

The slogan that the ICL defends, i.e., the right to independence and not unconditional and immediate independence, is quite the opposite of a clear position on the colonial question.

U.S. imperialism and the CIA. Once in power, he undertook to reorganize the upper echelons of the army, putting in place a new layer of younger officers, marked by their submission to Yeltsin or violent Great Russian nationalism. That is how the centrifugal forces thrown into motion by Yeltsin's coup d'état led to the destruction of the first state that grew out of the victorious 1917 October Revolution. At that point, many officers quit the army in disgust over the ban on the Communist Party in the army. I pose the question to Seymour, would you or would you not



Ta Thu Thau

Trotskyism vs. Opportunism on Colonial Rule

In 1998, the International Communist League (ICL) abandoned its policy of three decades and the entire Leninist/Trotskyst history of demanding unconditional and immediate independence for the colonies. The ICL now calls only for recognition of the "right to independence."

This was also the position adopted by the French Communist Party (PCF) in 1936 following the election of the Popular Front government of Léon Blum. In December 1937, PCF leader Maurice Thorez declared: "The fundamental demand of our Communist Party concerning the colonial peoples remains *the right to free choice, the right to independence.... the right to divorce* does not mean the *obligation* to divorce." With this sleight-of-hand, the now-reformist Stalinists ceased to call for independence for France's colonies.

In contrast, the Trotskyists continued to fight for independence for all colonial peoples. The Vietnamese followers of Trotsky, led by Ta Thu Thau (left), issued an appeal on 11 June 1936, as the Popular Front was coming to power in France, declaring: "Fellow workers, peasants and soldiers of Indochina! The proletarian revolution is reaching a boiling point in France. Hundreds and thousands of workers are on strike and occupying the factories and they are preparing a general strike.... Long live the total independence of Indochina! ... Long live the French and Indochinese proletarian revolution!" (from Ngo Van, *Revolutionaries They Could Not Break: The Fight for the Fourth International in Indochina, 1930-1945* [Index Books, 1995])

In this regard, among the 21 conditions for admission to the Communist International (1920), the eighth condition stipulated: "A particularly marked and clear attitude on the question of the colonies and oppressed nations is necessary on the part of the Communist Parties of those countries whose bourgeoisies are in possession of colonies and oppress other nations. Every party that wishes to belong to the Communist International has the obligation of exposing the dodges of its 'own' imperialists in the colonies, of supporting every liberation movement in the colonies, not only in words but in deeds, of demanding that their imperialist compatriots should be thrown out of the colonies, of cultivating in the hearts of the workers in their own country a truly fraternal relationship to the working people in the colonies and to the oppressed nations, and of carrying out systematic propaganda among their own country's troops against any oppression of colonial peoples."

Before 1996, the ICL justly applied this condition. In a 1995 declaration signed by the LTF (Ligue Trotskiste de France) and the Spartacist League of Australia, we read: "French imperialism out of the Pacific! Immediate independence for Polynesia, New Caledonia and all the other remaining French colonies!" [*Workers Vanguard*, 6 October 1995]. However, in another article on the Antilles in 1999-2000, the LTF recognized that the situation was on the point of exploding but did not call for immediate independence in order to strike a blow against its own imperialist colonizers and to open the road to internationalist class struggle. The LTF sadly demanded: "Down with the repression! For the right to independence!"

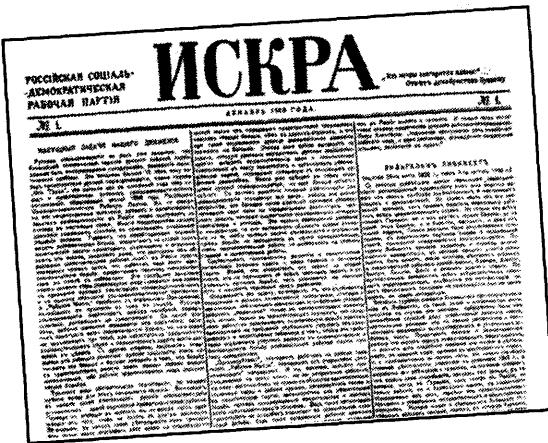
There is good reason to say that comrade Norden was right when he said the ICL would not have been accepted into the Communist International.

In the article on Puerto Rico from *Workers Vanguard* [8 January 1999] one can read in the title, "IG Centrists Pander to Latin American Nationalists." It's also written, "the IG's own position...in classic centrist fashion first capitulates to national-

ism," because the IG wrote in *The Internationalist*: "The Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International advocate independence for Puerto Rico in order to strike a blow against U.S. imperialism and because only by breaking out of the national subjugation of colonial rule can the international class struggle come to the fore. We support struggles for independence from colonial rule, even when they are led by petty-bourgeois or bourgeois forces..." [see "ICL Renounces Fight for Puerto Rican Independence," *The Internationalist* No. 6, November-December 1998]. As a Leninist, I salute this position.

The ICL's accusation against the IG can rebound against them. Trotsky teaches us in "The Colonial Peoples and the War" [part of the "Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" (May 1940)]: "The struggle for the national independence of the colonies is, from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat, only a transitional stage on the road toward drawing the backward countries into the international socialist revolution." He insists there that: "The revolutionary proletariat of the whole world gives unconditional support to the struggle of China or India for national independence, for this struggle, by 'tearing the backward peoples from Asiaticism, sectionalism, and foreign bondage,... strike[s] powerful blows against the imperialist states' [quoting from the 1934 article, 'War and the Fourth International']. but the ICL does not unconditionally support the demand for independence of the colonies from "their own" bourgeoisie; quite to the contrary, it pronounces itself agnostic on this key question, meaning that they would be content to accept colonialism, if that is the "popular will" of the colonial subjects.

In the same text ("Manifesto of the Fourth International on the War and Proletarian World Revolution"), Trotsky adds: "So long as the liberating movement is controlled by the exploiting class it is incapable of getting out of a blind alley.... In the colonial and semicolonial countries – not only in China and India, but in Latin America – the fraud of the 'People's



First issue of *Iskra* ("The Spark"), December 1900. The newspaper published in exile was key to forging Bolshevik party under repressive conditions of tsarist Russia.

Fronts' still continues to paralyze the working masses, converting them into cannon-fodder for the 'progressive' bourgeoisie and in this way creating an indigenous political basis for imperialism." But according to the ICL's new theory, popular fronts are impossible in semi-colonial countries where the proletariat is dominated by nationalist tendencies. Thus it abandons not only the struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie but also against the so-called "national" bourgeoisie.

This doubly capitulatory policy is now subjected to the test of the imperialist war against Afghanistan and now, once again, against Iraq. But whereas a decade ago, in the first Gulf War, the ICL fought to defeat imperialism and defend Iraq, today it obstinately refused to raise the call for the defeat of "its own" imperialism. In my view, and this context of imperialist war and decaying capitalism, not to call for immediate independence of the colonies is rendering a great service to imperialism to further maintain its subjugation of the colonies. The negative position of the ICL on the colonies and imperialist war demonstrates the accuracy of the IG/LFI analysis on the social-chauvinist nature and centrist course that has infected the ICL.

Once Again on the *Iskra* Perspective

It is clear that the ICL is burying the program of permanent revolution in that it abandons the struggle for the independence of the colonies and with its abandonment in deeds of the fight to forge Bolshevik parties in the ex-colonial countries, notably the Maghreb (North Africa) which forms a human bridge to France. In 1993, the TPT discussed the question of withdrawing from the country, the reason being the impossibility of any Bolshevik activity due to the conditions of repression. This was combined with the perspective of forging in exile the leadership of future parties oriented toward the Maghreb, through the publication of an émigré journal. At the time, some comrades went to France while others, for different reasons, preferred to remain.

If the ICL had maintained contact with them, it might have had the interest it lacked in distributing literature. You can read in *Le Bolchévik* in 1994, in an article on Algeria: "The Trotskyist

League, French section of the International Communist League, fights to build a vanguard party of the multiethnic working class, which will be the link between the struggle for socialist revolution in Europe and the struggle on the other side of the Mediterranean." At that time, the Trotskyist LTF understood well that the struggle for the *Iskra* perspective of forging a North African Trotskyist émigré nucleus is an indispensable part of building an internationalist French section of a Trotskyist international.

But something changed in the ICL/LTF. Suddenly, it was announced that the ICL's perspective in North Africa was shut down, on the pretext that the working class is politically finished and all is lost in this region under the impact of Islam, as was demonstrated by the defeatist line of the *Bolchévik* article in 1998, "Civil War Bleeds Algeria." Henceforth, the "human bridge" of emigration would only go in one direction, toward the *métropole* [imperialist country, France]. With this liquidationist perspective, the ICL then proposed – including to me – a perspective of joining one of its sections. To do what? Renouncing the perspective of regrouping cadres coming from ex-colonial countries for reasons of repression and the absence of perspectives for immediate revolutionary struggle means repudiating the theory of permanent revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and the negation of the role of the party as the conscious agent and indispensable factor for revolution.

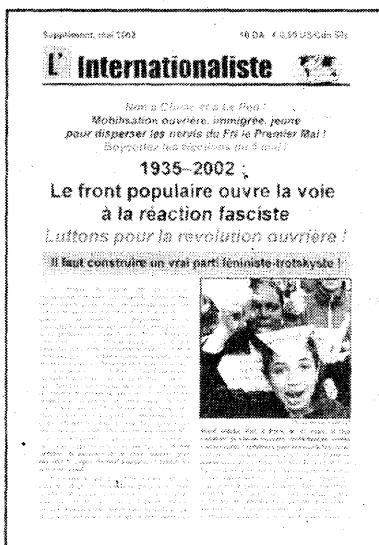
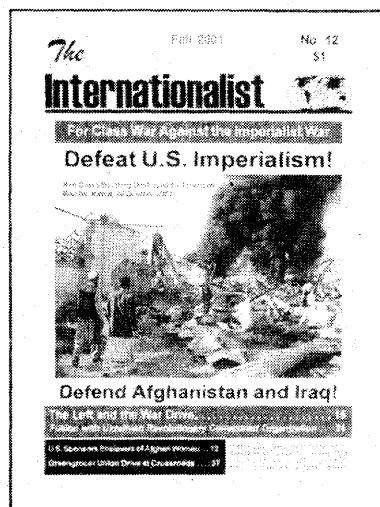
The historical betrayal of the ICL in Brazil and its shameful flight from the battle to throw the cops out of the municipal workers union in Volta Redonda; then its abandonment of the *Iskra* perspective, its renunciation of the call for independence of the colonies – with all this, the ICL is saying to us, the proletarians of the colonial and semi-colonial countries: colonial slaves, remain slaves until the time when we reign supreme in the *métropole*, because if you separate prematurely from the protection of our educating bourgeoisie, you will inevitably fall into your own barbarism.

Recently, in a leaflet written during the latest Kabyle rebellion in which it called for a Bolshevik party in Algeria, the LTF write in a hypocritical and centrist fashion: "For years, the Algerian working class has been crushed by a bloody war. This continues, but today there is a tangible possibility of a polarization of society on a class basis. This requires the complete and unconditional political independence of the proletariat embodied in the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party. This is Trotsky's perspective of permanent revolution. It is for this perspective that the International Communist League fights."

This is bizarre! Yesterday, according to the ICL, the Algerian working class is finished, *finished*, and consequently it shuts down work in North Africa – i.e., it liquidates the *Iskra* perspective and expels cadres from the country in question. And today the ICL/LTF gives itself the task, in words, of building a vanguard party which it has no intention of carrying out in deeds. It seems to me that this is what true left centrism means: "orthodox" empty words and actions which capitulate before "its own" bourgeoisie. Thus it will never make a revolution, not in North Africa, not in France, not anywhere.

Marcel Bensaid
October 2002

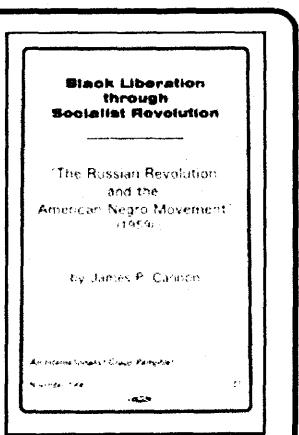
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Letter From South Korea

SEOUL, December 14 – A mass mobilization was called for 3 p.m., but there are only three or four thousand on the streets. Saturday is a working day for many Koreans (South Korea endures the longest workweek of any country in the OECD) so the truly mass mobilizations (up to half a million strong) have been occurring in the evenings.

Right now there are speakers from “civil society,” such as the Campaign for the Eradication of the Crimes of US Soldiers in Korea. In the crowd people are wearing three kinds of buttons. One shows the two murdered girls, and bears the slogan, “Reform the Unjust SOFA,” the Status of Forces Act which exempts U.S. soldiers from being tried in Korean courts. Another is a somber black button which only calls for Koreans to vote next Thursday. These are not nearly as popular as a large button which simply says (in English) “anti-USA.”

The crowd is left with the feeling that there is nothing to do but wait and vote. Vote for what? Lee Hoi Chang, the corrupt scion of a pro-Japanese dynasty, who staunchly defends the United States in general and the Republican Party in particular (to the extent of naming his party the “Grand National Party” in the image of the American GOP)?

Or Roh Moo Hyun, the defender of students tortured by the police under the military regime? But now he has become the defender of the kleptomaniac regime of Kim Dae Young, whose “New Millennium Democratic Party” (also christened after the Americans) he inherited!

In the crowd, the largest and best organized contingent by far is that of the Democratic Labor Party, the electoral vehicle of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). They are running Kwon Yong Gil against both parties, and at first glance workers might think that Kwon would provide at least a resounding *no* to the first two alternatives. At one point Kwon called for North Korean inspections of American nuclear facilities, nationalization of the *chaebol* and placing them under workers’ control. Some of his posters even say “mobilize the power of the working class.”

Kwon Yong Gil and the Democratic Labor Party received equal time on television and the popular response was tremendous. As a result, it has rather looked like Kwon would split the opposition to Lee Hoi Chang. The response of the Democratic Labor Party is plain to see today. Instead of turning to the rising tide in the streets, the DLP has toned down their left rhetoric, taken up the wretched slogan “Reform the SOFA!” and “Direct apology from George W. Bush.” They began to talk like social democrats of taxing the rich and improving infra-structure. And since you could really get all that with Roh Moo Hyun, the predictable (even *desired*) outcome is that Roh Moo Hyun will cut deeper and deeper into the working class vote.

For example, what does this slogan “Reform the Unjust



Protesters at December 14 rally outside Seoul city hall demanding “revision of SOFA” and no war on Iraq.

SOFA” really mean? The speakers on the platform are not shy in telling us. They are outraged that when American soldiers commit rape in Japan, they are tried by Japanese courts. However, when they commit murder in Korea, the so-called “Status of Forces Agreement” says that they will be tried by U.S. military courts, except in “special circumstances.” The slogan “Reform the Unjust SOFA” simply means, to most people (including the authorities at whom it is directed) that Korea wants equal treatment with Japan. So instead of being acquitted by American courts, U.S. soldiers would be slapped on the wrists by South Korean ones.

Two years ago, the “bar-girl” Kim Seong-hi was murdered by the American soldier Christopher McCarthy. He killed her because she would not perform “unusual sexual activities” that he demanded. Although he was arrested and held by the U.S. authorities (during which time he actually *escaped*), McCarthy was eventually tried by a South Korean court, under the SOFA. He got only six years, and the “blood money” which was offered by the defendant to the grieving parents in order to keep them from opposing early parole was an insulting two million won – less than 1,800 dollars!

This is NOT justice. It’s NOT what South Koreans are taking to the streets for. And it’s NOT what they should vote for either. Yes, mobilize the power of the working class! But for what? For Roh Moo Hyun? For Kwon Yong Gil?

No! Mobilize the power of the working class to *abolish* the SOFA! Mobilize the power of the working class to drive the US presence from the Korean peninsula.

Like most Korean elections, this is a war election. Only a revolutionary workers party, strong with the power of the hundreds of thousands of Korean workers who are on their way to Kwang-hwa-mun (one of the four main gates surrounding central Seoul) tonight, will suffice.

Defend North Korea...

continued from page 56

truly communist Korea following the path of Lenin and Trotsky would seek to extend the revolution, through political revolution against the Beijing Stalinists and social revolution in the imperialist centers, from Japan to the U.S.

Washington Threatens to Nuke North Korea

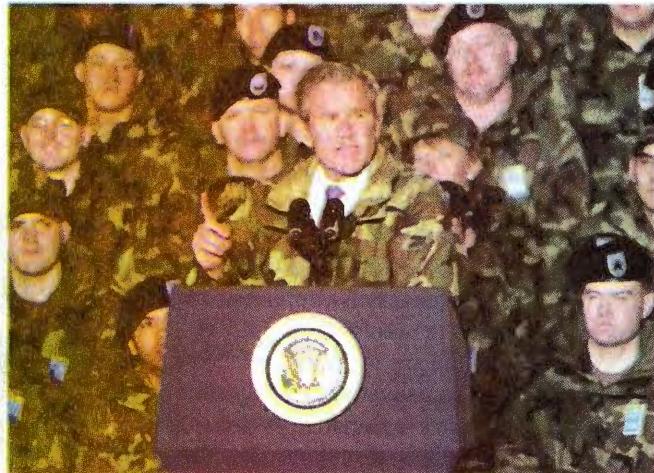
In recent months, U.S. president Bush has issued a series of military strategy documents declaring Washington's intention to carry out "preemptive" attacks, including using nuclear weapons against "rogue states." He also unilaterally cut off supplies of vitally needed heavy oil which the U.S., Japan and South Korea were bound by the 1994 Agreed Framework to supply to the North. Desperately short of energy, North Korea countered by restarting construction of nuclear power plants (which had been halted under the agreement) and kicking out UN atomic agency "inspectors." Seeing an opening, the Democrats declared North Korea the biggest "threat," counterposing it to Iraq. Squirming to make a show of mild dissent over the looming war in the Near East without seeming "soft on Saddam" Hussein, they revealed that in 1994 the Democratic Clinton administration was on the brink of launching an attack on North Korea's nuclear facilities.

It is vital that those who would oppose imperialist war understand this. Pacifist "antiwar movements" in the U.S. always tailor their policies to sidle up to Democratic Party "doves" as opposed to Republican "hawks." (In Europe, they similarly tail after the social democrats who alternate in power with conservative bourgeois parties.) Yet the reputed "peace-loving" American capitalist politicians at most have tactical differences with their openly warmongering colleagues, for they are all representatives of U.S. imperialism. Put the other party in power, or change the locale of the battle, and cooing doves suddenly become screeching war hawks, as the Democrats are over Israel ... or Korea. After all, it was Democratic presidents who launched the

Korean War (Truman), the Vietnam War (Kennedy) and the first Afghanistan War (Carter), as part of the Cold War against the Soviet Union. And don't forget World Wars I (Wilson) and II (Roosevelt). The IG/LFI does not call for an illusory "peace" in which the lambs lie down with the lions, but for *class war to defeat the imperialist war*.



President Roh Moo Hyun with South Korean troops near the DMZ.



Ahn Young-joon/AP

Above: Bush addresses U.S. troops at Osan, 21 February 2002. Below: War secretary Rumsfeld boasts that Pentagon can fight two wars at once.

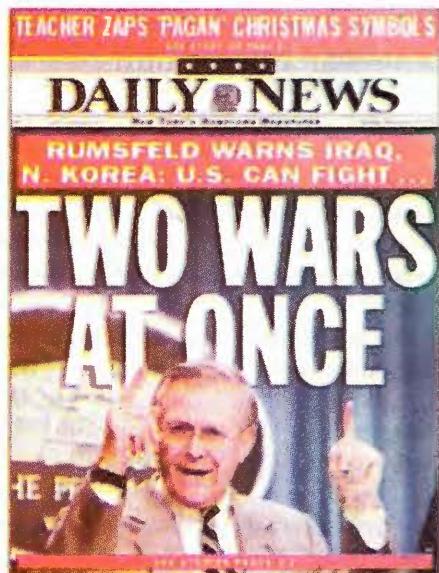
During his two terms in the White House, Bill Clinton was always looking for an opportunity to have his equivalent of George Bush Sr.'s 1991 Gulf War. (He eventually got his war by dismembering Yugoslavia, turning Bosnia and Kosovo into NATO protectorates and bombing the hell out of Serbia in 1999.)

Shortly after taking office, in March 1993, Clinton ordered massive "Team Spirit" war games in Korea, leading Pyongyang to threaten to withdraw from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Soon after, U.S. officials got the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to demand unprecedented intrusive inspections of purported nuclear sites in North Korea, claiming that plutonium from North Korea's Yongbyon research reactor was being used to develop nuclear weapons. In an article last fall, Clinton's secretary and assistant secretary of war, Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, revealed how close the U.S. government had come to launching a strike against North Korea:

"We readied a detailed plan to attack the Yongbyon facility with precision-guided bombs. We were highly confident that it could be destroyed without causing a meltdown that would release radioactivity into the air."

—"Back to the Brink," *Washington Post*, 20 October 2002
The sticking point was what North Korea would do in response:

"In the event of a North Korean attack, U.S. forces, working side by side with the South Korean army and using bases in



Japan, would quickly destroy the North Korean army and the North Korean regime. But unlike Desert Storm, which was waged in the Arabian Desert, the combat in another Korean War would take place in Seoul's crowded suburbs....

"Thousands of U.S. troops and tens of thousands of South Korean troops would be killed, and millions of refugees would crowd the highways. North Korean losses would be even

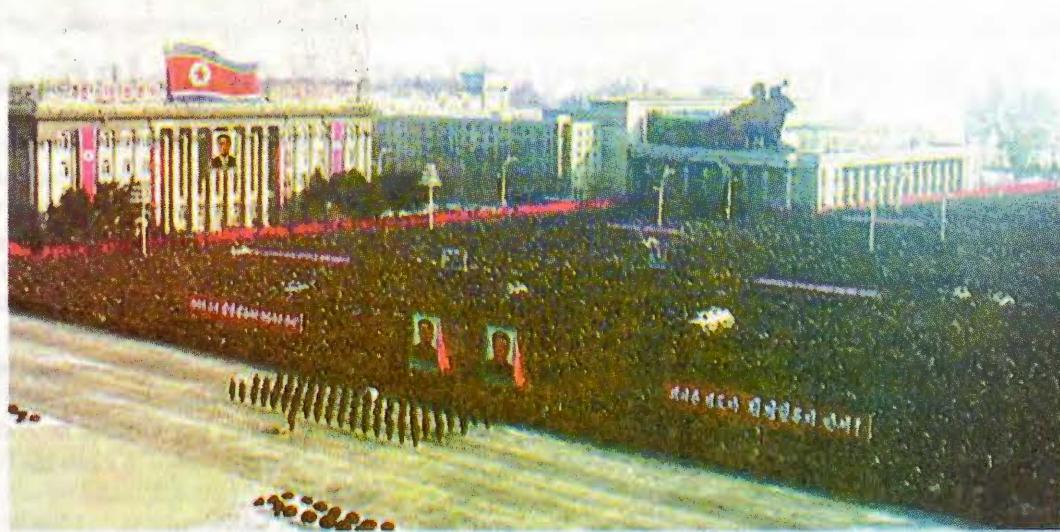
higher. The intensity of combat would be greater than any the world has witnessed since the last Korean War."

"At that time the situation was really dangerous," South Korea's then president Kim Young Sam confirmed. "The Clinton government was preparing for war," with an aircraft carrier off the coast, plans for naval bombardment and 50,000 U.S. troops on the border. "The American people will never know how close we were to war," said a State Department official. The South Korean president, of course, claimed credit for stopping Clinton by putting his foot down, and peripatetic Jimmy Carter

got in on the act by staging a visit to Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang. There the former U.S. president announced that North Korea would give up its nuclear power plants if they could be replaced by modern ones, plus a pledge from Washington that it would not attack with nuclear weapons. Whatever the behind-the-scenes machinations, this was codified in the "Agreed Framework" signed in October 1994. (See the article by Gregory Elich, "Targeting North Korea," 31 December 2002, for a comprehensive review of the U.S.' "nuclear frame-up" of the DPRK, on the site of the Montreal-based Center for

Research on Globalization
[www.globalresearch.ca])

Under the agreement, North Korea would freeze its graphite-moderated reactor at Yongbyon and halt construction on two other nuclear power plants, to be monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In return, the United States would arrange an international consortium for the construction of a large light water reactor, which doesn't produce significant amounts of plutonium that could be reprocessed for developing nuclear weapons, "by a target date of 2003." For years, nothing was done about building this reactor – it's still just a hole in the ground – and the Bush administration has never had any intention of building it. Article 3 of the 1994 agreement also stipulated, "The U.S. will provide formal assurances to the DPRK, against the threat or use of nuclear weapons



KCNA

Hundreds of thousands of North Koreans at January 7 rally calling for stronger military. Four days later, a million people filled the same plaza supporting DPRK's withdrawal from nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Chung Kyung-ryul/Reuters



The power of the Korean working class: trade-unionists brave tear gas, 28 December 1996, during nationwide strike against anti-labor law. Strike was defeated with capitulation by KCTU leaders.

U.S. Tries to Starve North Korea Into Collapse

The Kim dynasty is surely one of the most bizarre nationalist varieties of Stalinism on the planet. The “cult of the personality” in North Korea rivals that of Stalin or Mao. For sheer capriciousness and intrusiveness the Kims rivaled the Ceausescu family in Romania, although the latter’s bloody downfall was due in good part to its efforts to pay off loans from Western bankers, plunging the country into darkness for lack of energy. Unlike the genocidal Pol Pot regime in Cambodia (which was not any kind of workers state), the DPRK was not born of peasant activism but out of the defeat of the Japanese colonialists by the Soviet Army, which included a number of Korean worker Communists. Based on coal and other mineral resources, North Korea achieved a substantial industrialization of the country: up to the 1970s, the standard of living in the North was higher than in capitalist South Korea. But after losing Soviet markets and energy supplies, and under a U.S. economic boycott, industrial output in North Korea has reportedly fallen to 10 to 30 percent of its 1990 levels. Road freight fell by 70 percent, oil imports are down by 60 percent, total energy supplies plummeted by two-thirds, mines were shut down because of lack of electricity for pumps and spare parts for machines. Meanwhile, North Korea was beset by floods and droughts in a seemingly endless cycle.

This economic catastrophe had a drastic impact on food supplies as well. The food shortfall varies widely from month to month, and the estimates vary depending on the source: U.S. official statistics are often sheer propaganda, such as the claim by the Centers for Disease Control that the daily number of calories consumed per person in North Korea fell to under 1,000 calories a day in 1997, compared to the vital minimum of 2,100 (*CDC Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report*, 20 June 1997). But according to detailed estimates of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN, North Korea’s per capita daily caloric intake has oscillated between 2,100 and 2,200 for several years. (In contrast, in Cuba at the depth of the economic crisis in 1993, the figure was 2,280, and in 2000 it was 2,560.) Contrary to impe-

by the U.S.” Yet already under Democrat Clinton, the U.S. made a mockery of that “assurance.” Days before Korean president Kim Dae Jung (Kim Young Sam’s successor) visited the White House in June 1998 to discuss “new approaches” to North Korea and “peace and stability on the peninsula,” the U.S. Air Force staged an exercise including “strategic strike missions” in Korea. According to an article by Hans Kristensen of the San Francisco Nautilus Institute:

“A squadron of U.S. F-15E fighter bombers had taken off from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina on course for the Avon Park Bombing Range in Florida. Their mission: to simulate a long-range nuclear strike against North Korea.

“Under their wings the aircraft carried BDU-38 mockups of the B61 nuclear bomb. The crews had spent five months training for this event – their final exam for full certifica-

rialist propaganda about the North Korean population being reduced to eating grass, due to food rationing there have been no credible reports of mass starvation, as there certainly would have been in any capitalist country facing similar drastic food shortages. But the food crisis is severe: 60 percent of North Korea’s children under 5 years of age are underweight, the highest reported percentage in the world.

George Bush seeks to use this to condemn the North Korean regime, saying: “I loathe Kim Jong-Il. I’ve got a visceral reaction to this guy because he is starving his people. They tell me, we don’t need to move too fast [against North Korea] because the financial burdens on people will be so immense ... if this guy were to topple.... I just don’t buy that” (in an interview with Bob Woodward, *Washington Post*, 19 November 2002). Yet it is not because North Korean agriculture was highly collectivized and mechanized that there is widespread malnutrition in the DPRK today. On the contrary, this is a direct result of the counterrevolutionary collapse of the Soviet degenerated workers state and a brutal imperialist economic boycott. For North Korea, this has meant that most of the aging tractors stand idle for lack of spare parts, and fertilizer production has fallen from 600,000 tons a year to less than 100,000 as the plants can’t produce for lack of electrical energy. Because of this, agricultural operations are at 20 to 30 percent of their former levels. By cutting off heavy oil supplies which the U.S. was obligated by treaty to deliver, and in the middle of the brutally cold Korean winter, *the imperialists are cold-bloodedly attempting to starve the North Korean population and cause the collapse of the fragile regime.*

Bureaucratic regimentation of the working class, of which North Korea is again an extreme example, is the Stalinists’ principal means of protecting their privileged rule from the proletariat in whose interests they claim to rule. Rigid police controls can for a time stave off collapse, but not indefinitely. Today, the Kim Jong Il regime calls its program “Army First,” by which it means

tion to annihilate North Korea if ordered by the president to do so.”

–Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, September-October 2002

So much for Clinton’s assurances of no nuclear strike on North Korea: they were literally not worth the paper they were written on. The United States deployed nuclear warheads in Korea from 1958 at least until 1991, when the first Bush administration announced their removal. During the Korean War, fought under the cover of the United Nations, “UN” commander Douglas MacArthur advocated a nuclear strike against Chinese troops. He also ordered and carried out the destruction of “every means of communication, every installation, factory, city and village” north of the UN battle lines to the Chinese border. Massive amounts of napalm were dropped on North Korean cities, over 2,300 gallons in one bombing run on Pyongyang, which was



North Korean agriculture was highly mechanized. Now most tractors are idle for lack of spare parts and fuel; fertilizer is in short supply due to lack of energy to run fertilizer plants. As a result most agricultural production work is now done by hand.

that the huge North Korean Army gets first claim on all resources. “All victories of our army and people in carrying out the cause of socialism in 2002 were due to our Leader Kim Jong Il’s Army-First policy and his able leadership. Our Great Leader Kim Jong Il has shown us new principles, tactics and strategies for our Army-First revolution, and pointed the direction that our army and people must march into,” proclaims the DPRK New Year’s greeting. Certainly, if the North Korean army began to crumble, the government would evaporate. But this “principle” will not feed the people or return North Korean factories to life.

To deal with the economic crisis, the DPRK has resorted to market mechanisms copied from the Chinese. In particular, they are seeking to raise agricultural output by allowing commodity prices to float since last summer. This has led to sharply higher prices for food, but not much increased output, as adequate supplies of energy, fertilizer, spare parts, seed and just about every other element needed for productive farming are impossible to get. Sooner or later, this will produce major discontent in the urban working class.

The other main line of Kim Jong Il’s policy is to seek

completely flattened. Air Force general Curtis LeMay said, “We burned down just about every city in North and South Korea both,” and “we killed off over a million civilian Koreans and drove several million more from their homes” (see Callum MacDonald, “So Terrible a Liberation’ – The UN Occupation of North Korea,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, April-June 1991). And the U.S. accuses North Korea of seeking to acquire “weapons of mass destruction,” claiming that North Korean fears of a U.S. nuclear attack are paranoid!

Bush Regime Escalates the Threats

Even before taking office, the Bush team made it clear that they wanted nothing to do with the 1994 agreement. Their strategy was to intensify the economic strangulation of North Korea by denying it vital energy supplies. The Stalinist regime of Kim Il Sung, followed after his death in 1994 by his son Kim Jong Il, had

“peaceful reunification” with South Korea. The 2003 New Year’s Greeting declared:

“The June 15 North-South Joint Declaration will remain a banner our nation can hold high in the movement for national reunification. The stance and attitude toward the Declaration is a touchstone that distinguishes patriotism from treason. All fellow countrymen must uphold the Declaration as an invariable landmark for national reunification and bring about a decisive turn in the accomplishment of reunification.”

The North Korean bureaucrats are gambling that nationalism will prevail over anti-Communism, and South Korea’s government will resist the pressure of U.S. imperialism. History demonstrates that this is an illusion. The leaders of the DPRK and ROK have been signing joint statements since 1991, to no avail. Korean nationalism, like all nationalism, is a *bourgeois* ideology. Proletarian internationalists join in the struggles against U.S. occupation forces in Korea, but from a sharply counterposed *class* standpoint. We warn that the widespread nationalist sentiment, which sees Korea as simply an American colony, is ultimately a program for collaboration with the Korean capitalist bosses.

Korea is divided not just by U.S. imperialism but by a *class* divide, and ultimately class interests will prevail. If some South Korean magnates such as the head of Hyundai favor continued dialogue with the DPRK, it is because they want to exploit cheap labor and make capitalist inroads into the collectivized North Korean economy. Some South Korean generals and politicians may not object vociferously to a North Korean bomb, since they figure they will inherit it when the Stalinist regime finally goes. In their bourgeois nationalist mentality, it could then come in handy as a deterrent as a nation of 75 million Koreans faces off against 90 million Japanese and the 1.2 billion Chinese. But that is no comfort to Korean workers, north or south, *for whom the most immediate enemy is the Korean bourgeoisie*. Either the Korean bourgeoisie will destroy the North Korean deformed workers state or the Korean proletariat will rise up and sweep away the bureaucrats in the North and the capitalists in the South.

taken the Stalinist pipe dream of building “socialism in one country” to an extreme. Under the watchword of *juche*, the DPRK didn’t even join the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Cooperation (Comecon), even though its economy was utterly dependent on exchange with the USSR. After the Soviet Union collapsed under the hammer blows of imperialist military and economic pressure and the implosion of the Stalinist bureaucracy during 1989-92, the economic isolation of North Korea was even greater than that of Cuba. (Cuba could earn some hard currency through exports of sugar and biomedical products, as well as tourism, whereas North Korea’s marketable exports were limited to textiles and missiles.) Thus it was unable to buy necessary oil to keep its industries and agriculture running. The result was massive economic dislocation.

Together with economic pressure, the U.S. has now proclaimed a doctrine of “preemptive strikes.” After Bush placed

North Korea second, after Iraq, in his list of "evil" nations in the January 2002 State of the Union address, by March the Pentagon had been ordered to develop more flexible guidelines for using nuclear weapons to include "targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack" and "in the event of surprising military developments," elastic categories indeed. Seven target countries were listed: Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya and Syria ("US Has Nuclear Hit List," BBC News, 9 March 2002, quoted by Elich). In July, the Pentagon leaked portions of its new Nuclear Posture Review calling for using earth-penetrating nuclear weapons against underground command bunkers and missile silos such as those in which North Korean No-Dong missiles are housed. In September, the White House issued its National Security Strategy calling for "proactive counterproliferation efforts" to "deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed."

Shortly afterwards, the Bush administration dispatched assistant secretary of state James Kelly to Pyongyang for its first discussions with the DPRK leadership since taking office. Kelly announced he was not there to negotiate, accused the Kim Jong Il regime of conducting a secret uranium enrichment program to develop nuclear weapons, declared that there could be no dialogue until this was abandoned, and accused the North Koreans of human rights violations. In response to Kelly's ultimatum, the North Korean spokesman defended the DPRK's right to have nuclear weapons. Two weeks later, the Bush administration leaked a report that, "Confronted by new American intelligence, North Korea has admitted that it has been conducting a major clandestine nuclear-weapons development program for the past several years" (*New York Times*, 17 October 2002). The U.S. counted on the pliant bourgeois press to accept this revelation as good coin, as it did, not bothering to ask why North Korea should make such an admission.

An official statement by North Korea's UN mission refuted Washington's invention, saying "the D.P.R.K. made itself very clear to the special envoy of the U.S. president that the D.P.R.K. was entitled to possess not only nuclear weapons but any type of weapon more powerful than that, so as to defend its sovereignty and right to existence from the ever-growing nuclear threat by the U.S." (*New York Times*, 27 October 2002). In fact, the U.S. has presented no evidence that North Korea is developing nuclear arms, nor that Iraq possesses or is developing weapons of mass destruction ("WMD"). No matter, the Bush gang figures it can lead the world around by the nose like it does the Democrats in the U.S. Using its concocted North Korean "admission," Washington tried to get its allies to agree to rip up the 1994 Agreed Framework and stop oil shipments to North Korea. South Korea, Russia, Japan and European Union officials all expressed



North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear plant. What's next when the imperialist press prints targeting photos like this?

skepticism, and refused to turn around a tanker already underway. But after browbeating from the U.S., they eventually agreed to stop future shipments. Now they are dithering over whether this demand is a precondition to diplomatic discussions.

Meanwhile, on December 10, the administration issued a new strategy document declaring its "right" to use

"overwhelming force – including through resort to all our options" against states with "WMD." In a secret annex to the document, North Korea was listed as one of the countries targeted (Mike Allen and Barton Gellman, "Preemptive Strikes Part of U.S. Strategic Doctrine," *Washington Post*, 11 December 2002). Simultaneously, the Pentagon ordered a Spanish warship in the Arabian Sea to board a North Korean freighter bound for Yemen to "inspect" it. This was carried out with television cameras conveniently recording the commandos' "daring" act of high-seas piracy. "Discovering" a cargo of missiles, the U.S. speculated that they might be bound for Iraq, until Yemen claimed them, whereupon the ship was allowed to go on its way. This was conveniently timed for last-minute impact on the December 19 South Korean elections, intended to undercut support for Roh Moo Hyun of the Millennium Democratic Party who vowed to continue President Kim Dae Young's "sunshine policy" of negotiations with North Korea.

Yet the U.S. strategy backfired. The day before the South Korean vote, Roh declared that "if the U.S. and North Korea start a war, we will stop it." Contrary to the Americans' pollsters, Roh's appeal for peace on the Korean peninsula had more appeal than his hard-line anti-Communist opponent Lee Hoi Chang, and Roh won the vote handily. This threw Washington for a loop, particularly after weeks of increasingly large and vociferous demonstrations in Seoul and elsewhere in South Korea over the acquittal of two U.S. soldiers who had run over and killed two 14-year-old Korean girls. The girls were on their way to a birthday party as the 50-ton Army minesweeper sped along a road through a Seoul suburb on maneuvers last June. The soldiers were not even found guilty of manslaughter, and no charges were contemplated against their superiors who criminally ordered maneuvers in a residential neighborhood. What particularly angered protesters was that the killers were "tried" by a U.S. military court under the colonial-style Status of Forces Agreement, granting U.S. personnel immunity from Korean prosecution.

Rising Resentment of U.S. Occupation Forces in South Korea

Tensions are now escalating between the arrogant U.S. imperialists, for whom Korea is but another "theater" in their global war drive, and the Korean population on both sides of the 37th

Photos: Yun Jai-hyoung



Left: Campaign rally for Kwon Young Gil of Democratic Labor Party, 8 December 2002. Right: Kim Yong-gyu of opposition Socialist Party waves after destroying a mock North Korean missile during his election campaign. Class-conscious workers could give no vote for the social-patriotic DLP and SP.

parallel, the highly militarized “Demilitarized Zone” (DMZ) that has divided the peninsula since the end of the fighting in the Korean War. (The war itself never ended, only a truce is in effect.) For decades this was one of the front lines of imperialism’s Cold War against the Soviet bloc degenerated and deformed workers states. North Korea has been on the receiving end of endless U.S. provocations and war threats. When the DPRK seized the USS *Pueblo* in 1968 as it was spying on North Korean installations, U.S. president Johnson considered mining Wonson harbor, launching air attacks and seizing North Korean ships, but had to refrain from attack for fear of war with China or the Soviet Union. With the USSR gone, the U.S. militarists and their allies are emboldened. In December 1998, June 1999 and June 2002, South Korea launched attacks on North Korean ships in the Yellow Sea, as did Japan in December 2001. The U.S. could use (or stage) one of these recurring incidents to serve as the battle cry for an attack on North Korea.

The Americans have been demonizing North Korea and Kim Jong Il as they have long done with Saddam Hussein. The latest James Bond spy thriller *Die Another Day* is an “axis of evil” special focused on Korea, featuring a North Korean special agent out to conquer the South and set off nuclear war. South Korean students have picketed the movie for its depiction of the North as a “terrorist” state. The latest issue of *Newsweek* (13 January) takes Bondian fiction into the realm of pseudo-news with a cover story on “North Korea’s Dr. Evil,” asking: “Is Kim Jong Il a Bigger Threat Than Saddam?” The same theme is echoed by *Time*. Meanwhile, resentment is boiling over after half a century of U.S. occupation troops trampling through South Korea. Their presence is inescapable: a sprawling U.S. base of 630 acres is located in the middle of the capital, Seoul. American soldiers report numerous incidents of Koreans yelling at them, “GI go home, GI go home!” U.S. newspapers report, “Many young South Koreans sincerely believe what North Korea has taught for decades: that American troops arrived here in 1950 and split the nation in two” (*New York Times*, 8 January). Which, of course, they did.

Clearly the North Korean Stalinist regime is in difficult straits. Militarily threatened by the warmongers in the Penta-

gon, economically squeezed by the imperialist blockade, which has led to excruciating fuel and food shortages, lacking state support from a larger Stalinist power with ample resources, ultimately North Korea cannot endure against the more powerful capitalist imperialist forces through incantations of *juche*. Its very survival as a workers state requires workers revolution in the South, spreading to the industrial powerhouse of Japan, which would immediately threaten the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy in Pyongyang. While the Kim Jong Il regime is looking to the Hyundai bosses, Trotskyists look to the Hyundai workers who along with other auto and metal workers have a long history of militant struggle against the *chaebols*, the military-dominated ROK regime and the U.S. imperialists.

In January 1997, hundreds of thousands of South Korean workers took to the streets of Seoul and other large cities in a roiling general strike (see “Nationwide Strike Shakes South Korea,” *The Internationalist* No. 1, January-February 1997). Over the last couple of years there have been militant labor struggles in particular against the planned takeover of the Daewoo automobile manufacturing operations by the U.S. auto giant, General Motors. But in both cases, the strikers’ militancy was dissipated by the leadership of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), which channeled it into support for bourgeois politicians. After supporting Kim Dae Jong for many years, the president’s anti-union policies carrying out the dictates of the International Monetary Fund led the KCTU to support the candidacy of Kwon Young Gil of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). In the December 19 South Korean elections, Kwon got 4 percent of the vote. But as a letter from Seoul indicates, in the face of the rising militancy of the demonstrations against the U.S. military presence in the South, the DLP toned down its demands, calling only for a reform of the Status of Forces Act (SOFA) and an apology from George Bush, instead of demanding to abolish the SOFA and drive the U.S. troops out!

The DLP is a milk-sop social-democratic party hardly to the left of the Japanese Socialists or European social democrats like Germany’s Schröder or Jospin in France. When it talks vaguely of socialism, it means a West European-style welfare state. It

presidential candidate Kwon Yong Gil was responsible, as then leader of the KCTU, for selling out the South Korean workers' militant strikes in 1997 and subsequently. Kwon and the other KCTU leaders played a key role in permitting the passage of Kim Dae Young's labor "flexibilization" laws that permitted the huge layoffs that have drastically cut the membership and curtailed the power of the unions. Although they have posed as standing to the left of the government-connected KFTU, like all social democrats, the DLP/KCTU tops support the capitalist regime. They merely want to tinker with it by implementing a few reforms. The explosive 1997 strikes scared them as much as they did the bosses and bourgeois politicians, for they could easily have turned into a revolutionary situation but for the absence of the key component – a revolutionary leadership.

Kwon's clear aim throughout the campaign was to facilitate a "popular front" with Roh Moo Hyun of the bourgeois liberal Millenium Democrats, himself a former labor lawyer. In fact, the DLP's election program was so similar to that of the MDP, that many DLP supporters ended up voting for Roh in order to "stop Lee Hoi Chang." This is the class-collaborationist logic of the popular front to "fight the right." Class-conscious workers should note that in Spain during the 1930s, the reformist social democrats and Stalinists created the People's Front in order to head off the threat of workers revolution by chaining the workers to the bourgeoisie. Leon Trotsky noted at the time that in this case, the popular front was made with the "shadow of the bourgeoisie," such as the former labor lawyer Luis Companys. The parallel to Kwon and Roh today is striking.

Significantly, the DLP does not defend North Korea in the face of the sharply escalating imperialist threats and economic warfare. It talks of "reunification of South Korea and North Korea," but does not mention the class character of such a reunification. In South Korea, where every party from the luke-warm left to the extreme right calls for reuniting the fatherland, the DLP's program can only mean a *capitalist reunification* of Korea. Moreover, Kwon joined the imperialist chorus denouncing North Korea for resuscitating its nuclear power program. In an interview with the *Korea Times* (6 November 2002) he said: "What is clear is that North Korea should stop its nuclear development program." The same was true of the Socialist Party, a conglomeration of former Stalinists, whose candidate Kim Yong Gyu demanded a stop to the North Korean nuclear program (as well as the removal of U.S. troops) and even destroyed a mock North Korean missile as a campaign stunt.

It is true that many workers in the KCTU still look upon the DLP as their party. However, in an election where the key issues of Korean reunification, the presence of U.S. forces and threats to North Korea were front and center in the debate, there is no way South Korean militants could make a step toward revolutionary class independence of the proletariat and oppose the imperialist offensive by voting for the social-patriotic DLP (or the far smaller SP). Those who called for a vote to the DLP, like the pseudo-Trotskyists of the International Bolshevik Tendency, are only serving to delude the workers, while demonstrating their own opportunist appetites.

For Korean Trotskyism! For Revolutionary Reunification!

In a country with a long history of Stalinist rule in North Korea and significant pro-DPRK sentiment among South Korean workers and students, it is urgently necessary to forge a Trotskyist party, not a reformist labor party but a revolutionary workers party that can unite the Korean proletariat in revolutionary struggle on both sides of the DMZ. Such a party must stand firmly on the program of revolutionary defense of North Korea against imperialism, as the Trotskyists stood for during the first Korean War.

In contrast, the South Korean followers of the social-democratic tendency of the late Tony Cliff (now buried in the DLP) hold that North Korea is "state capitalist," as supposedly was the Soviet Union under Stalin and his heirs. That was precisely the pseudo-Marxist argument that their mentor Cliff used in refusing to defend the DPRK during the Korean War, for which he was rightly expelled from the Fourth International. From the Korean War to the U.S.' anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan in the '80s, the Cliffites stood on the side of imperialism and its puppets, while Trotskyists fought against these forces of counter-revolution. Similarly, when anti-Soviet pseudo-leftists tailed after the U.S./NATO Cold Warriors in the 1980s, Trotskyists hailed the Red Army in Afghanistan and called to defeat Solidarnosc counterrevolution in Poland.

The anti-Communism of U.S. imperialism is reflected in the "antiwar movement" in the West, as liberals launch nasty red-baiting attacks on the Workers World Party (WWP), which leads the A.N.S.W.E.R. coalition, over its political support to North Korea and the Kim Jong Il regime. The Stalinoid reformists of the WWP are caught in a bind, for they simultaneously want to rope in the liberals while hailing "socialist Korea." *Workers World* refers to "Korea's legendary leader, Kim Il Sung," and declares that Kim Jong Il (whom they call the "chief executive" of the DPRK) "has been accorded the title Great Leader" (by whom?). In the early '90s, WWP founder Sam Marcy traveled with a party delegation to Pyongyang to meet Kim Il Sung, and *Workers World* editor Deirdre Griswold still hobnobs with the DPRK bureaucrats on May Day.

So how do these professional tailists reconcile their posture as American social-pacifists arguing for "money for jobs, not for war" with North Korea's affirmation of its right to have nuclear weapons to defend itself against imperialism? The answer is that the WWP ducks the question, only reporting the parts of the North Koreans' appeals calling for a non-aggression pact with the U.S. Yearning for "peaceful coexistence," they look back to the '94 Framework Agreement, noting that "the Clinton administration agreed it would help North Korea build a light water reactor" while remaining silent about Clinton's threats to nuke the DPRK.

In Europe, hardline Stalinists don't have to appeal to bourgeois liberals who only want to change the priorities of U.S. imperialism, so they can more fulsomely praise the North Korean Stalinist regime. The Belgian Party of Labor (PvdA/PTB) just published a special issue on North Korea (*Solidaire*, 2 January) referring to Kim Il Sung as "a giant of history." (While the WWP's Sam Marcy split from Trotskyism in the late 1950s

after supporting Moscow's suppression of the pro-socialist 1956 Hungarian workers uprising, PvdA leader Ludo Martens is an unreconstructed Stalin admirer, who praises that "Great Leader" for ordering the murder of Trotsky.) While relatively frank about the excruciating situation of the DPRK, the PvdA like the WWP also fails to mention North Korea's defense of its right to nuclear weapons. It limits itself to denouncing "the Americans," without touching on the complicity of the European imperialists in the economic blockade of the DPRK.

Kim Jong Il enthusiasts in the U.S. also include the red-white-and-blue Communist Party USA (CPUSA) and the pro-Castro Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Reformist admirers of "Third World" Stalinist regimes like North Korea, whatever their particular political pedigree, all accept to one degree or another the Stalinist program of building a "socialist state" on a national basis while trying to induce the imperialists to leave them alone. "*Juche*" is just an extreme nationalist variant of this dogma. But as Marxists from Marx to Lenin and Trotsky have insisted, an isolated socialist or communist society is impossible to realize, for it would be undermined by the more powerful economic forces of capitalism. Socialism, a classless and stateless society, can only be built on a world scale, including the efforts of the economically most advanced nations. The revolution can first break out in an economically relatively less advanced country, such as Russia or China, but it must extend to the surrounding capitalist countries and the imperialist heartland to be victorious and open the door to socialism.

But for the rump Stalinists and their hangers-on, the counterrevolution that swept through East Europe is a book of seven seals. For the likes of the PTB's Ludo Martens, it is all the result of a conspiracy by Mikhail Gorbachev. To the American SWP's Jack Barnes, capitalism has still not been restored in Russia and most of East Europe (including East Germany)! The WWP held that Serbia was a "socialist state" under the nationalist capitalist banker-butcher Slobodan Milosevic. Unable to comprehend the collapse of the Soviet Union and the break-up of Yugoslavia under the hammer blows of counter-revolution, they are incapable of fighting and defeating capitalist restoration in China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba today. Behind their often sycophantic praise for Kim Il Sung/Kim Jong Il is the fact that they politically support the Korean Stalinists' program. Like their Great Leader, they have no alternative to seeking "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, which is the road to defeat. The fight to build an authentic Trotskyist party as part of a reformed Fourth International is the road to victory for the Korean working people.

Not Korean Nationalism, But Proletarian Internationalism!

In recent days, following North Korea's January 10 announcement that it is withdrawing from the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, the Bush administration has decided to backtrack. Now it is talking of talking with the Pyongyang regime, although what they will talk about is still a matter of some dispute. Washington is even making noises about providing economic aid to the North (such as from private energy concerns

— like Enron!!) in exchange for canceling its nuclear program. This is hardly a comfort for opponents of imperialism. The U.S. government simply wants to finish off Saddam Hussein's Iraq (at a cost of untold thousands of lives) before taking on Kim's North Korea. But the warmongers in the White House and the Pentagon will get around to it, if they are not defeated first. There can be no doubt that in Rumsfeld's desk drawer (or safe, or laptop computer hard drive) there are plans for a raid on Yongbyon like the Israelis did to the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Ossirak in 1981.

Kim Jong Il has demanded a non-aggression pledge from the U.S. as the precondition for again closing down North Korea's nuclear plants. Not a few bourgeois foreign policy and nuclear experts have commented that the DPRK's "Great Leader" has acted quite rationally, given Bush's threats, and played his hand well, as if it was a high-stakes poker game. But whether there will once again be an imperialist war on the Korean peninsula is a life-and-death matter for the working people. As Bill Clinton's empty promise of no nuclear attack on North Korea showed, no trust can be placed in the diplomatic commitments signed by the U.S. imperialists. Bush & Co. will easily find a pretext to rip them up, as they have done with treaty after treaty since taking office in a judicial coup d'état.

The North Korean Stalinists are narrow nationalists, whose political program is reformist at best. They have no intention of sparking socialist revolution in the South, which would sweep them from their privileged perches within days of a victorious workers insurrection in Seoul. Their policy is and has been for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism — i.e., class collaboration on an international scale. Their problem is and has been that they can't get an imperialist partner for this tango. Should the U.S. government decide to sign another agreement with the North, it will be no guarantee for the survival of the North Korean deformed workers state. U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell once warned that the U.S. could turn North Korea into "burnt charcoal." One cannot doubt the former general's readiness to incinerate a whole country.

One need only recall the disastrous results of Stalin's confidence that he had staved off German attack by his 1939 pact with Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union was very nearly destroyed when Hitler sent the Wehrmacht tanks and SS extermination squads heading east less than two years later. Bush's word means no more than Hitler's. As Trotsky wrote then, "The defense of an isolated workers state depends much more on the support of the working masses all over the world than on two or three supplementary strategical points," or another paper treaty ("The World Situation and Perspectives," February 1940). The isolated workers state that the Bolshevik leader was referring to was the Soviet Union, whereas today we are dealing with the incomparably weaker and more isolated North Korean regime. The future of the Korean Revolution and the fate of the peninsula will be decided by the *international* struggle to defeat imperialism. *World socialist revolution* must be the goal of Korean working people and their comrades in struggle throughout the world. ■

**U.S. Occupation Troops Get Out and Stay Out!
For Revolutionary Reunification of Korea!****Defend North Korea Against
Nuclear Blackmail and War Threats!**

JANUARY 11 – A “post-Cold War world”? Hardly. The gang of rabid Cold Warriors left over from the Bush I administration which now runs Bush II is going after North Korea with a vengeance. The White House has made it clear that after attacking Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, the besieged country presided over by Kim Jong Il is next on Bush’s “axis of evil” hit list. The Democrats, meanwhile, counterpose North Korea to Iraq as the “main threat,” accusing the administration of focusing on the “wrong crisis.” In a tit-for-tat response, Pentagon chief Rumsfeld proclaimed that the U.S. can successfully wage two wars at once. The twin parties of U.S. imperialism compete in nuclear saber-rattling and calls for economic sanctions to squeeze the isolated Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). But while Democrats and Republicans engage in a provocative “game” of warmongering one-upmanship, mass protests have swept the capitalist Republic of Korea (ROK) in the south over U.S. war moves and the presence of 37,000 American occupation troops there.

In fighting against the looming U.S. invasion of Iraq, class-conscious workers and opponents of imperialism must also forthrightly oppose Washington’s *nuclear blackmail and war threats* in the escalating confrontation in Northeast Asia. The Internationalist Group/U.S. and League for the Fourth International call for *revolutionary defense of North Korea*, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, against the military and economic threat of counterrevolution. Despite the Stalinist regime, which undercuts the collectivized economy in its quest for a deal with U.S. imperialists and South Korean capitalists, we insist on North Korea’s right to defend itself against aggressive imperialism by acquiring any arms it can, including nuclear arms. The U.S. already devastated the peninsula during the 1950-53 Korean War, slaug-

tering 3 million Koreans and obliterating the capital of Pyongyang along with every other city in the North. This must not be allowed to happen again.

We demand an *end to American imperialist occupation of South Korea: all U.S. troops get out, now, and stay out!* Against the imperialists’ attempt to force the collapse of North Korea, Trotskyists fight for *revolutionary reunification of*



Seoul, December 21: Protesters gather before marching on U.S. embassy to protest acquittal of U.S. soldiers who ran over and killed two 14-year-old Korean girls. Under Status of Forces Act, they were tried by U.S. military court.

Korea, through *socialist revolution in the South*, for decades a virtual U.S. protectorate and still under Washington’s thumb, and *workers political revolution in the North*, with its heavy-handed parasitic bureaucratic regime. South Korean workers must overthrow the rule of the *chaebols*, the giant conglomerates which grew rich off patronage from the brutal military-based regime that ruled the country for four decades, and kick out the imperialists. Contrary to the Korean Stalinist nationalist dogma of *juche* (self-reliance), socialism cannot be built in half a country or even in a barricaded Korean peninsula. A

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